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THE CARTOON JIHAD

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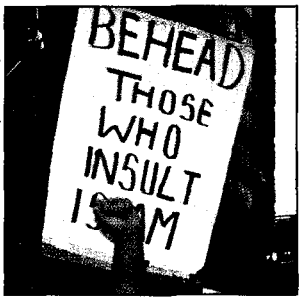

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Bobby, Martin, and John

The funeral of Coretta Scott King last week in Lithonia, Ga., brought together two of THE SCRAPBOOK's favorite statesmen, Sen. Edward Kennedy and former President Jimmy Carter, on the same podium for the first time since—oh, maybe it was the 1980 Democratic Convention, when Kennedy effectively declined to endorse Carter for reelection.

Well, that was then, and now the two old warriors are united by a common adversary, George W. Bush, who sat on the very same podium at Mrs. King's funeral. The president was soon to be taught an interesting history lesson. First up was Kennedy, who regaled mourners with the story about how Martin Luther King had been "jailed in October 1960 and given an incomprehensible sentence of four months of hard labor in a rural penitentiary for a minor traffic violation. The situation was ominous, and many feared for his life. I remember my brother, President Kennedy, calling [Mrs. King] to say he would do whatever was necessary to help. Robert Kennedy called the judge the next day, and miraculously Martin was released!"

Actually, he was Senator, not President, Kennedy at the time; but when Edward Kennedy said that "Robert Kennedy called the judge," the congregation erupted in a loud, prolonged, even raucous ovation—so prolonged, in fact, that Kennedy was obliged to repeat the phrase and, presumably, instill in the minds of Mrs. King's mourners the idea that the Kennedy brothers had been champions of civil rights.

Then came Jimmy Carter. THE SCRAPBOOK has long since given up expecting a modicum of dignity from the winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, even at a funeral, and he didn't disappoint us. In a finger-wagging allusion to the Bush administration's policy of eavesdropping on suspected al Qaeda terrorists, Carter told the congregation that "it was difficult for [the Kings] personally—with the civil liberties of both husband and wife violated as they became the target of secret government wiretapping, other surveillance, and, as you know, harassment from the FBI."

Carter, too, was rewarded with prolonged applause. But here's the history lesson: Who, as attorney general of the United States, authorized the "secret government wiretapping, other surveillance, and, as you know, harassment from the FBI" of Martin Luther King? The answer is Robert Kennedy, the very same Robert Kennedy who "called the judge" in October 1960. THE SCRAPBOOK does not expect an ovation for clarifying the record, but readers are welcome to savor the irony. ♦

Bombing Obama

Democratic senators Harry Reid and Barack Obama tried to pull a fast one on John McCain and got hit with the literary equivalent of a B-52 strike. McCain's been working on a bipartisan lobbying reform bill. Obama, Reid's designee on reform, told McCain he wasn't a partisan hit man and wanted to help out. So, at McCain's invitation, Obama attended a meeting on the bill and let McCain know the next day that he appreciated working together. But that night Obama's office, evidently at Reid's request, emailed, and released to the press, a letter to McCain, then en route to Germany, mourning Washington's "culture of corruption," and lamenting that a bipartisan reform wouldn't be "effective"; only the Democratic leadership's bill, which has no Republican cosponsors, "represents a significant step in addressing many of the worst aspects of corruption."

McCain arrived back in his office on February 6 and responded with his own letter, also released to the press:

> I would like to apologize to you for assuming that your private assurances to me regarding your desire to cooperate in our efforts to negotiate bipartisan lobbying reform legislation were sincere. . . . Thank you for disabusing me of such notions with your letter. . . . I'm embarrassed to admit that after all these years in politics I failed to interpret your previous assurances as typical rhetorical gloss routinely used in politics to make self-interested partisan posturing appear more noble. . . . But I understand how important the opportunity to lead your party's effort to exploit this issue must seem to a freshman Senator, and I hold no hard feelings over your earlier disingenuousness.

Ouch! ♦

Merkel Rising

First she met with President Bush and spoke of the importance of German-American friendship. Now she's taking a strong stand against Iran's threat to go nuclear. And all the while she manages to hold together a fragile coalition government. Is there anything Angela Merkel can't do? Speaking at the Munich Conference on Security Policy earlier this month, the new German chancellor did not mince words:

> We want to prevent the production of Iranian nuclear weapons, and we must. Iran's nuclear program prompts the justified suspicion, the justified concern, the justified fear that its goal is not the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, but that military considerations are also in play. Iran has willfully—I am afraid

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I have to say this—and knowingly overstepped the mark. I must add that we are, of course, compelled to respond to the totally unacceptable provocations of the Iranian president. I am particularly called to say this in my role as chancellor of Germany. A president who questions Israel's right to exist, a president who denies the Holocaust, cannot expect Germany to show any tolerance at all on this issue. We have learned the lessons of our past.

This, of course, prompted Iranian officials to compare Merkel to Hitler. Protesters in Tehran held up posters featuring her caricature and the words "Stupid Zionist." According to the latest polls, the chancellor's popularity is high and growing higher. ♦

Condemning Souter

In last week's cover story, Matt Labash detailed the revenge fantasy of Logan Darrow Clements and the Committee for the Protection of Natural Rights (CPNR). Aghast at the Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision, which allows government to seize people's property and give it to private companies for "economic development," Clements and Co. are trying to persuade the town of Weare, New Hampshire, to seize the house of Justice David Souter, on whose land they hope to erect the Lost Liberty Hotel.

The day after we went to press, an AP headline announced "N.H. Town Rejects Plan to Evict Souter." But this is premature. As Clements says, paraphrasing a guy with a very similar last name, "Reports of our demise have been greatly exaggerated."

The confusion came after a ballot initiative was put forward by the anti-Souter forces. Outnumbered at the town selectmen's meeting, they saw their initiative language changed to prevent selectmen from taking Souter's property. But the measure is nonbinding, meaning the selectmen are still pretty much free to do what they want. Thus, the real action will take place in Weare's March election, in which two of the five selectman's seats are up for grabs, and two of the five candidates running for those seats are pro-Liberty Hotel candidates.

While it's always been unlikely that a majority of selectmen would carry out the anti-Souter campaign against the wishes of the townspeople, it only takes three selectmen to start proceedings against Souter's property. Clements says if his forces win two seats and can't persuade another selectman to join them, "We're prepared to stick around for another year until the next election."

In other words, David Souter might not want to start any long-term redecorating projects just yet. Keith Lacasse, a Clements ally and candidate for selectman, concurs that the fight isn't over just because of a little parliamentary dirty pool. "Remember what Benjamin Franklin said about democracy: 'Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote.'" ♦

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Casual

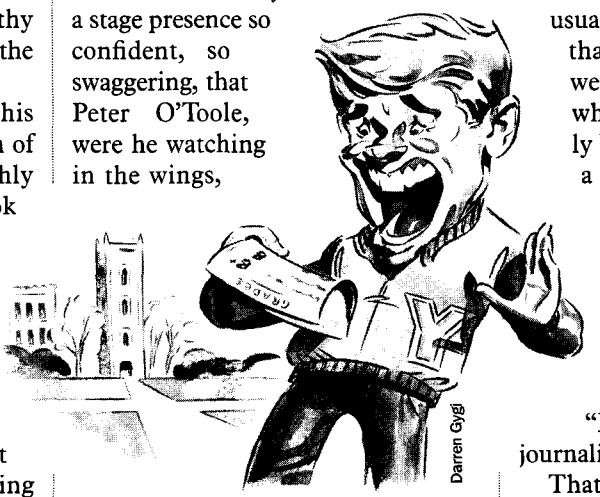
The Revenge Lecture

I am close to living out a fantasy I've nursed since maybe the second week of my first year of college. I am returning to my alma mater, not, mind you, to hang around the old campus bar like some aging cad talking up the coeds with their fake IDs (though maybe I'll do that too). No, the political science department has invited me to deliver a lecture to an audience of students and professors on a topic of my choice—you know, like a gray-haired worthy speaking on Important Matters of the Day.

I started fantasizing about this moment years ago, with the return of my first college grades. Thoroughly stung by that swarm of B's, I took long showers and rehearsed my revenge lecture, throughout which I would glance knowingly at professors whose shortsighted appraisals of my work were now contradicted by my widely acclaimed brilliance. I would give the most cynical speech possible on making one's way in the world. The title would be "Flattery: The Key to Success in Life." I would argue that school was like life—A's were awarded to suck-ups, while true greatness went unrecognized.

Other fantasy lectures I delivered back then took place at colleges where I'd been refused admission. Needless to say, the talks were a major intellectual event, marking a sea change in the culture. I would convincingly and without breaking a sweat disabuse those assembled of their false gods, and make them rue the day their Top Five *U.S. News and World Report*-rated institution failed to recognize my remarkable powers.

I have over the years added new details to my homecoming fantasy. But now the whole thing's become a distraction. I picture the big wood-paneled and stained-glass lecture hall where I took Intro to Religion and imagine myself taking everyone's breath away with some hilarious, rapier-witted talk in which I blend anecdote, hard learning, long quotations in foreign languages I don't speak, and gigantic mathematical equations of the kind featured in *Good Will Hunting*, the whole performance bolstered by a stage presence so confident, so swaggering, that Peter O'Toole, were he watching in the wings, would crumble in envy. Then I come out of it and realize I have very little idea what I am going to say in my very real lecture.



Add to this problem the fact that I am not actually learned. What modest store of knowledge I possess I am not ashamed of, but it lacks the weight of major accomplishment. I've realized that if I'm an intellectual, it's purely a matter of social classification. What I am is a writer, a journalist—one, to boot, who's particularly promiscuous in his interests. I have no "beat," no regular subject I've gained intimacy with over the years. Rather, if one week a topic tickles my fancy, I write about it. If another week, the same subject provokes a yawn, I move on. The positive way of looking at this is that I am a generalist. But if I were to give a lecture based on the skills I've developed, it would have to be titled "Non-Specialization: The Key to An Enjoyable Professional Life and Something Less than Stunning Worldly Success."

In my shoes, some wannabe thinkers would blame the profession, and I'm not above doing so. The workaday journalist can't expect to be seen as anything but a total lightweight by people who really know about a subject. I'm better off than some, in this regard, since working for a weekly allows a generalist like me the time to bone up on a subject before having to commit himself in print. And yet, even after reading a few books (or perhaps as a result), I usually see more clearly than ever that I have achieved something well short of papal authority on what I am writing about. Recently I learned a lot about music for a piece I was writing on soul, but, boy, I struggled to finish the article, haunted the whole time by how little I knew compared with the truly learned writers I was reading. "David," I had to keep telling myself, "Remember, you're only a journalist."

That's little comfort now that I'm working on my address to my alma mater. Most of the audience will be students, presumably, but several of my old professors will be there, and some of these guys are the real thing. As a defense mechanism, I've come up with an enormously vague lecture topic in which I am stuffing all sorts of odds and ends arranged so as to create the appearance of deep knowledge. But I am again haunted by the specter of genuine scholars, with their actual gray hair, long French quotations, and impressive diagrams.

What to do? I'll keep reminding myself that I'm only a journalist. I'll work hard. I'll persevere. And if I should come up short, there's always the old campus bar.

David Skinner

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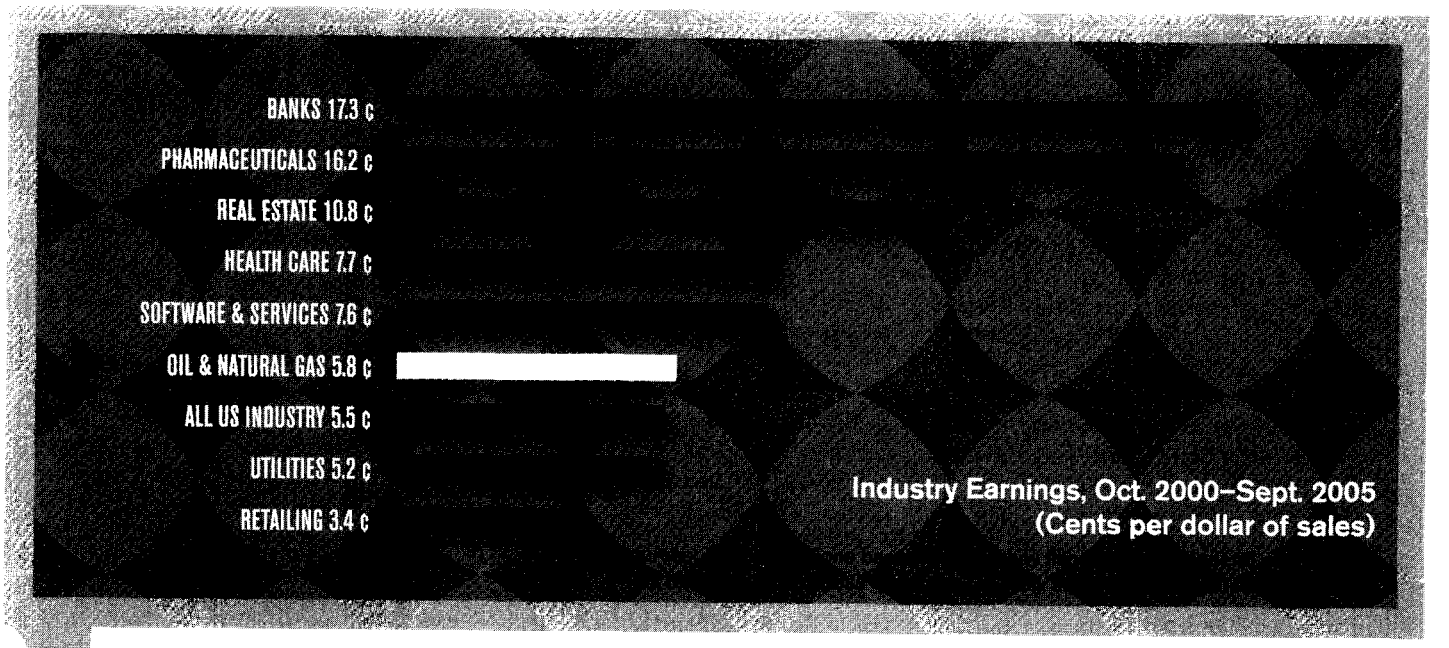

Straight talk on earnings

"**Oil company** earnings are too high."

That's the word on Main Street, for sure. But on Wall Street, there's a somewhat different perspective on oil industry earnings.

What many may find surprising is that, on average over the past five years, the profitability of America's oil and natural gas industry is far less than many other major industries, like banks, pharmaceuticals and real estate.

Part of the explanation is that it costs a lot just to operate an oil, refining and natural gas company. Ours is a competitive, high-technology and engineering business of massive scale that produces and sells commodities. It costs billions of dollars to explore for, produce, refine and distribute the products consumers need.

It requires billions more dollars to maintain the delivery system necessary to ensure a reliable supply of energy and to make sure it efficiently gets where it needs to go: to you, our customers.

We're committed to making the necessary reinvestments to ensure our nation has a stable and reliable supply of energy today and tomorrow.

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Dems Shun GOP Greens

I want to commend Walter Russell Mead for "The Ice Cream Party and the Spinach Party" (Feb. 6), in which he highlights the family-friendly benefits of telecommuting. However, Mead, a self-avowed "foreign policy buff," is under the misimpression that Republicans are devoid "of attractive domestic policy initiatives" in this area. In fact, many of his arguments are familiar to Republicans, as they are ones we have long promoted for a more family-friendly workplace.

Specifically, we have proposed "comp-time" and "flex-time" for private sector workers. "Comp-time" gives employees the ability to choose paid time off instead of overtime pay. "Flex-time" permits employees to work more than 40 hours in one week, and then comparably fewer hours in the subsequent week. Since the mid-1980s, congressional Republicans have been working toward enactment of such family-friendly policies.

Yet, each time we vote, Democrats oppose workplace flexibility. As recently as last year (see roll call votes 27 and 258), and as long ago as 1989 (see roll call vote 37), Republicans have asked Democrats to join them in enacting legislation that would allow workers the flexibility to better meet the needs of their families while still being able to meet the needs of their employers. To date, the Senate has voted at least eight times since 1989 to enact these benefits. Democrats have repeatedly defeated these worker-friendly benefits and, in some years when they controlled Congress, even prevented them from coming to a vote.

It is time Democrats acknowledge these are fair policies that have proven successful in the public sector and, thus, should be afforded to private sector workers, too.

Sen. Jon Kyl
Washington, D.C.

Evolving Debate

Adam Wolfson's "Survival of the Evolution Debate" (Jan. 16) well identifies the salient points of a public dispute that goes back to the famous 1860 Huxley-Wilberforce Oxford debate, which Huxley won on debating points, without really proving or disproving anything.

As Wolfson indicates, few today reject the basics of evolution, which arise from observed phenomena supported by empirical evidence. Darwin's attempt to explain the cause of such evolution by a theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest, however, is a scientific conjecture that remains unproven. Darwin only provided us with an explanation, which even he admitted may or may not be true.

On the other hand, contemporary "Darwinists" such as Richard Dawkins and the late Stephen Jay Gould maintain an absolute presumption of naturalism—they presume a closed system of natural cause and effect because to do otherwise requires one to posit an alternative hypothesis of a transcendent, intelligent being as first cause. They argue that in light of Darwin's theory, to be other than an atheist is unreasonable, irrational, or perhaps even "ignorant, stupid, or insane."

The danger of maintaining such an unquestionable presumption and defending it at all costs, however, is that the Darwinists may fall into the same obscurantism with which Huxley branded Bishop Wilberforce. Stubbornly adhering to their hypothesis, the naturalists seek to quash evidence of intelligent design that might in the end prove the more fruitful and promising theory.

Gary Inbinder
Woodland Hills, Calif.

Eine Kleine Dissonance

Regarding William Kristol's "Bravo! Mozart" (Jan. 30): I am always puzzled by the love people have for Mozart. To me, there is an age for enjoying Mozart, and that age is 10. With the exception of his piano concerto No. 23, which is immortal and transcendent, I just do not relate to his music. Yes, Mozart was the most naturally talented musician ever to live: There is balance and proportionality in everything he composes, as well as energy and innovation. When it comes to the actual works themselves, though, I find Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, and Mahler greater.

In fact, I cannot think of any of the greats whose work I would leave behind in favor of Mozart's if I had to go to a desert island. I have been puzzling over this for years: Is it that I lack subtlety and so find almost every great composer from Handel to Copland and Bernstein more interesting because their genius is more obvious? Is it that Mozart simply appeals to the intellect rather than to the soul, to people who like crossword puzzles and murder mysteries? Or is it that it takes a truly delicate musical sensibility to appreciate him? I'll never know, but I'm always puzzled when a fellow like Victor Borge says that Mozart is in a class apart. He obviously hears something I'm missing. I may be a rube, but give me Chopin or Gershwin any day.

Ezra Marsh
Baltimore, Md.

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Oh, the Anguish!

"U.N., E.U. and Muslims link in call to curb protests," read the *Financial Times* headline last week. A "U.N.-brokered statement," the paper reported, was issued "in an effort to curb days of protests, some violent some peaceful, at the publication and republication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. 'The anguish in the Muslim world at the publication of the offensive caricatures is shared by all individuals and communities who recognise the sensitivity of deeply held religious belief,'" the statement said.

Oh, the anguish! And why not? You remember—don't you?—the wave of bloody pogroms against Muslims living in Denmark following the *Jyllands-Posten*'s publication, on September 30, 2005, of 12 cartoons depicting (in most cases) the prophet Muhammad. (The newspaper was testing freedom of speech in Denmark, and challenging "the self-censorship which rules large parts of the Western world.")

Peter Steiner

Then, on October 17, some of these Danish cartoons were reprinted on the front page of a major Egyptian paper, *Al Fagr*. And you surely must remember the anguish *that* provoked. Tens of millions of Egyptians were so tormented they could barely refrain from attacking Israel, slaughtering all foreign businessmen, and destroying the pagan Sphinx. So anguished was President Mubarak that he announced he would return his $2 billion in "infidel U.S. foreign aid." For his part, the chief Islamist televangelist on Al Jazeera, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, was so anguished he repudiated the financing his branch of the Muslim Brotherhood receives from the "hatemongering European Union." Meanwhile in Iran, the nuclear program ground to a halt, as anguished engineers found they could no longer in good conscience consult technical manuals produced by Zionist and Crusader scientists.

None of these anguished reactions actually occurred, of course—no pogroms, no renunciation of U.S. and E.U. aid, no hiccup in the Iranian nuclear program. Because there was no real "anguish." In truth, by December nothing much had happened because of the cartoons.

So a group of Danish imams took off for the Middle East to try to cause trouble. To do this, they added three cartoons to their roadshow that they seem to have ginned up—crude propaganda pieces that would be guaranteed to stir a mob, just in case the original illustrations didn't produce the effect they were after.

The militants' trip was a success. Various extremist groups and terror-connected Islamists decided to use the cartoons as yet another weapon in the radical Islamist attempt to intimidate the West, and various Arab dicta-

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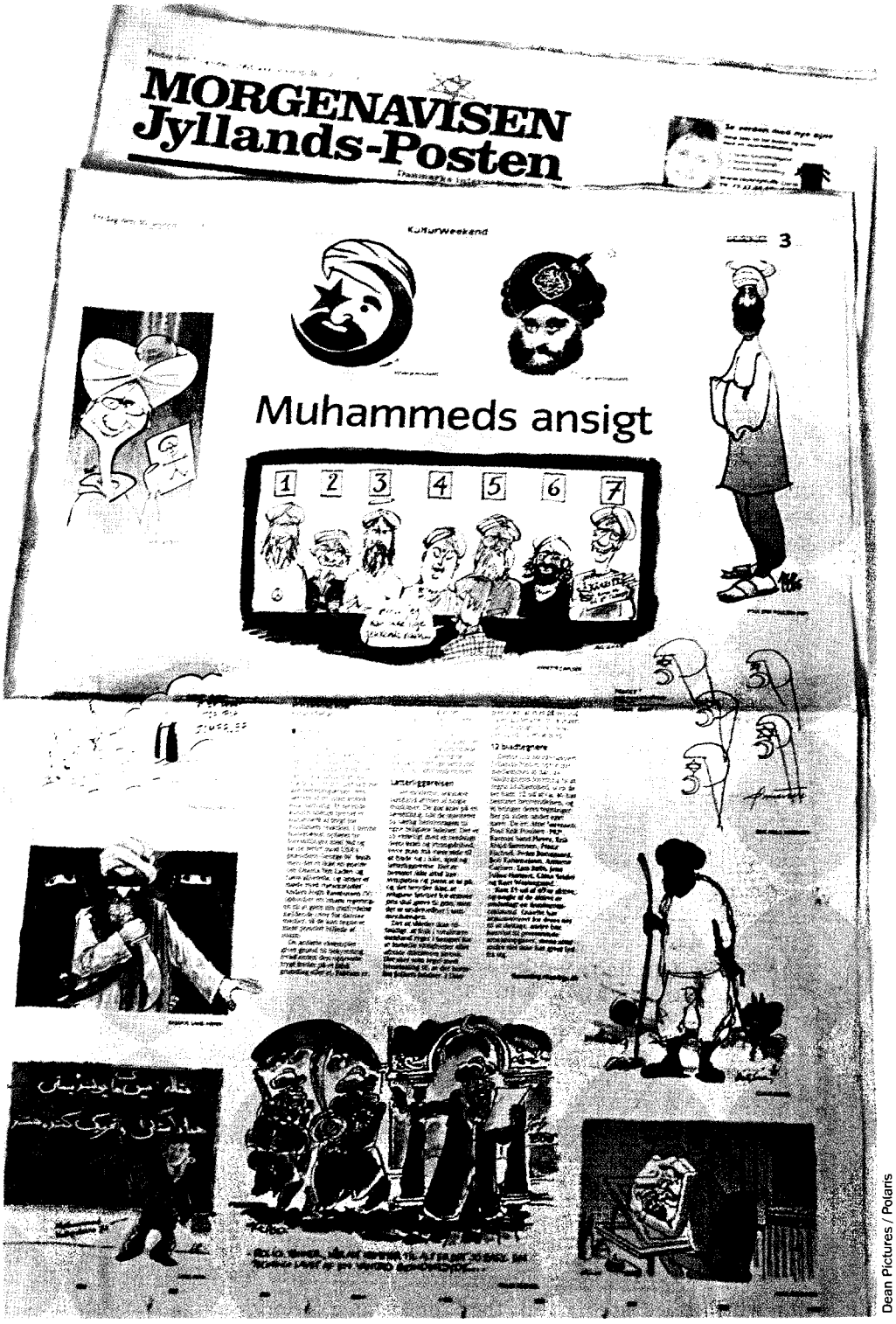

Dean Pictures / Polaris

The original illustrations, September 30, 2005

torships saw a political opportunity in starting some anti-European riots.

And you can understand their calculation. Since 9/11, the West has gone on offense against radical Islamists and Middle Eastern dictatorships. That assault has apparently been more threatening to them than many of us realized. From Iraq to Palestine to Iran, from Islamist enemies of liberty to dictatorial opponents of democracy, those who are threatened by our effort to help liberalize and civilize the Middle East are fighting back with whatever weapons are at hand, and with whatever invented excuses and propaganda ploys they can discover.

As Olivier Guitta reports elsewhere in these pages, "The actions of Islamist agitators and financiers have deliberately drummed up rage among far-flung extremists otherwise entirely ignorant of the Danish press. The usual suspects—the regimes in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran—have profited from the spread of the disorders."

This is a moment of truth in the global struggle against Islamic extremism. Will Hamas succeed in creating a terror state on the West Bank? Will a terror-sponsoring Iranian regime succeed in its quest for nuclear weapons? Will Danish imams succeed in intimidating Europe—or the free world as a whole?

With respect to Hamas, Iran, and the cartoons, the response of Western leaders hasn't been particularly encouraging—with the notable exception of Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark. Robert Frost said of liberals that they're incapable of taking their own side in a fight. We will see how deeply a degenerate form of liberalism has penetrated our souls. Will we anguish? Or will we fight?

—*William Kristol*

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The Republicans' Poll Position

It's lousy, but that means less than you think.

BY FRED BARNES

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM on the 2006 midterm elections is that Republicans will take a bath. Because of the Abramoff scandal, an unpopular president, and low morale, Republicans have the political stars aligned perfectly against them—or so it seems. The polls often cited as pointing toward a massive Republican defeat, however, are not quite conclusive. True, they are hardly encouraging to Republicans. But polls are tricky things, often more problematic than predictive. As such, they're worth a closer look.

A hardy perennial of pollsters is whether the public is satisfied that the country is on the right track or is dissatisfied and thinks we're on the wrong track. This is supposed to measure the general feeling of well-being in the country, especially economic satisfaction. The Gallup poll in January found that 61 percent of Americans felt the country was headed in the wrong direction, and only 36 percent thought it was on the right track.

For what it's worth, this poll result is bad news for Republicans, the incumbent party that holds the White House and Congress. But it's not a fair measure of the optimism or pessimism of Americans. A negative finding was once regarded as proof incumbents were in trouble. On Election Day in 2004, Gallup found that 52 percent were dissatisfied, 46 percent satisfied. Yet President Bush was reelected and Republicans picked up seats in the Senate and the House.

What's happened to the right track/wrong track question that makes it less useful? For one thing, it measures all sorts of dissatisfaction. Many conservatives fear America's moral climate is worsening. Thus they think the country is moving in the wrong direction. For their part, Democrats have made the poll result partisan. They seize on the wrong direction number simply because they loathe President Bush and Republicans. No doubt Republicans will do the same if Senator Hillary Clinton is elected president.

One theory of midterm elections is predicated on the presidential job approval number. If the economy is strong and the approval number is roughly 50 percent or better, the incumbent party should avert serious losses. In the latest Fox News poll, Bush's approval rating is 44 percent. But that's among registered voters and it's *likely* voters that really matter. The Rasmussen poll uses likely voters and it has the president at 47 percent, still low but closer to the magic 50 percent.

In 2004, Bush was also at 47 percent and became the first president since FDR to win reelection while his party also picked up House and Senate seats. The point here is that the minimum-50-percent-presidential-approval rule is not ironclad. A party can win with less.

A third poll—one particularly relevant to midterm elections—gauges party preference. The new Fox poll found that 42 percent believe "it would be better for the country" if Democrats wrested control of Congress from Republicans. Thirty-four percent preferred Republicans to maintain control.

This poll result, too, should not be taken too seriously, at least this far ahead of the November election. In 1994, Republicans trailed in party preference for most of the year, then wound up capturing 52 House seats. It wasn't until the final weeks of the campaign that they surged ahead in preference. It turned out Republicans were far more energized and likely to vote on Election Day than Democrats.

That leads to the important matter of voter intensity. At the moment, Democrats appear to be far more passionate than Republicans. "Show me an issue where Republicans have passion," says pollster Frank Luntz. The only one, he suggests, is immigration, and Republicans are divided on it. "Who can't wait to vote?" he asks. It's Democrats.

"No matter what number you use, it shows Republicans are in real trouble," Luntz says. The latest Pew poll, for instance, asked respondents if their congressional vote would be a vote "against" Bush. In February 2002, only 9 percent said they would be voting against the president, and 34 said they'd be voting for him. In February 2006, 31 percent said they intended to vote against Bush in the midterm election, 18 percent for him.

Bush, of course, won't be on the ballot in November, but Republicans will. So this is bad news for them. Worse, this poll result may be a measure of voter intensity, with Democrats considerably more eager to vote than Republicans, if only to register their opposition to Bush by voting against his party.

Luntz looks at six indicators that may affect Republicans in the midterm election: voters' desire for change, fear, anxiety, anger, sense of betrayal, and the presence of an alternative. On the first five, Republicans are faring poorly, he says. But on the sixth, Democrats have yet to emerge as a credible alternative to

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voters who otherwise might vote Republican.

Despite the current troubles, Luntz goes on, Republicans could recover. Bush must perform well enough to lift his approval number close to 50 percent. And he must persuade the public that the economy truly is in solid shape. Perception of a strong economy, not just the reality, is important.

Perhaps Republicans will weather the sixth year of the Bush presidency and avoid disaster in November. Bad polls, after all, are merely polls. And in politics, poll numbers are not static. Bush's approval rating in the Fox poll was 36 percent three months ago and has climbed 8 percentage points since. So there's only one sensible way to look at polls—skeptically. ♦

The Cartoon Jihad

The Muslim Brotherhood's project for dominating the West. BY OLIVIER GUITTA

IT IS NOW ABUNDANTLY CLEAR that the recent murderous protests over cartoons of the prophet Muhammad published in a Danish newspaper last September were anything but spontaneous. The actions of Islamist agitators and financiers have deliberately drummed up rage among far-flung extremists otherwise ignorant of the Danish press. The usual suspects—the regimes in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran—have profited from the spread of the disorders, and even the likes of tiny Kuwait has reportedly offered funds to spur demonstrations throughout France. More important, however, and perhaps less widely understood, the cartoon jihad is tailor-made to advance the Muslim Brotherhood's long-term worldwide strategy for establishing Islamic supremacy in the West.

As first reported by the Italian terrorism expert Lorenzo Vidino on the Counterterrorism Blog, one of Denmark's leading Islamists, Imam Ahmed Abu-Laban, led a delegation late last year to visit influential figures in the Muslim world. He took with him a dossier of cartoons, both those that had been published and others, much more offensive, of dubious provenance. One place he took his road show was Qatar, where he briefed Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a prominent leader of the Muslim Brotherhood and a star of Al Jazeera.

Even after the riots began, Abu-Laban continued his meddling. On February 4, he told *Islamonline.net* that Danish demonstrators were going to burn Korans in the streets of Copenhagen, a falsehood that nevertheless added fuel to the fire.

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Abu-Laban's extremist connections are well established. A Palestinian who is close to the Muslim Brotherhood, he was expelled from the United Arab Emirates in 1984 for his fiery sermons and denunciations of local leaders. According to Vidino, he served as translator and assistant to Talaal Fouad Qassimy, top leader of the Egyptian terrorist group Gamaa Islamiya, in the mid-1990s. During the Iraq war, he called the Danish prime minister "an American puppet." In August, he told the *Washington Post* that the Danes "have made immigrants pay the price. Muslims have become the scapegoat. They think we will undermine their culture and their values."

Abu-Laban's labors were not in vain, and everywhere the loudest protests have come from the Muslim Brotherhood. On February 3 in Paris, Larbi Kechat, an imam linked to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, said, "The most abject terrorism is the symbolic kind, which spreads unlimited violence." Meanwhile, in Qatar, al-Qaradawi was calling for an "international day of anger for God and his prophet," describing the cartoonists as "blasphemers" and Europeans as "cowards." Acknowledging the latter's role, the pan-Arab daily *Asharq Al-Awsat*, in London, stated on February 8, "The issue disappeared from the radar until Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the mufti of Al Jazeera TV, seized upon it and called for Muslims worldwide to protest."

Finally, according to the Moroccan daily *Le Matin*, the U.S. branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim American Society (MAS), called on

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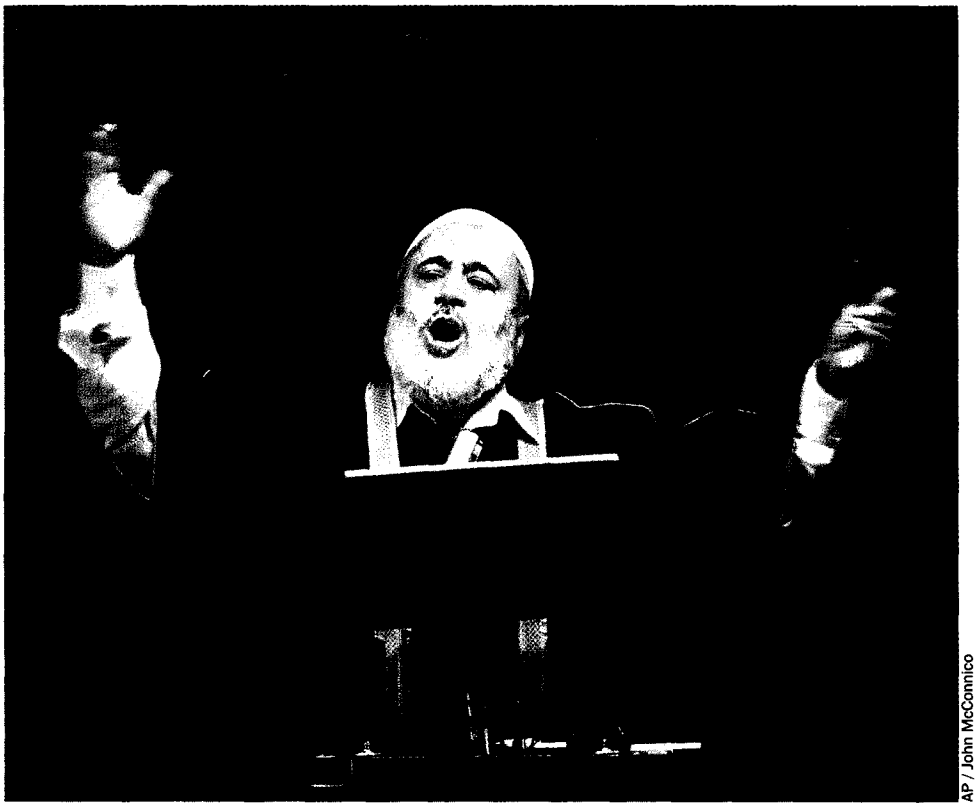

AP / John McConnico

Imam Ahmed Abu-Laban at his mosque in Copenhagen, February 10

Muslims everywhere to use their economic power to punish European countries where the cartoons were published. After French and German newspapers reprinted the controversial cartoons, MAS executive director Mahdi Bray commented, "Denmark has already paid an economic price for disrespecting Islam. If France and Germany want to be next, then so be it."

That the Muslim Brotherhood would seek to inflame this controversy makes perfect sense, given the organization's Islamist philosophy and past links to al Qaeda. What may not be sufficiently appreciated, however, is the extent of the Brotherhood's deliberate planning for an Islamist takeover of the West—and how neatly the cartoon jihad conforms to its strategy.

A new book published by Le Seuil in Paris in October may further Western understanding of this reality. Written by the Swiss investigative reporter Sylvain Besson and not yet available in English, it publicizes the discovery and contents of a Muslim Brotherhood strategy document entitled "The Project," hitherto little known outside the highest counterterrorism circles.

Besson's book, *La conquête de l'Occident: Le projet secret des Islamistes* (The Conquest of the West: The Islamists' Secret Project), recounts how, in November 2001, Swiss authorities acting on a special request from the White House entered the villa of a man named Yusuf Nada in Campione, a small Italian enclave on the eastern shore of Lake Lugano in Switzerland. Nada was the treasurer of the Al Taqwa bank, which allegedly funneled money to al Qaeda. In the course of their search of Nada's house, investigators stumbled onto "The Project," an unsigned, 14-page document dated December 1, 1982.

One of the few Western officials to have studied the document before the publication of Besson's book is Juan Zarate, named White House counterterrorism czar in May 2005 and before that assistant secretary of the treasury for terrorist financing. Zarate calls "The Project" the Muslim Brotherhood's master plan for "spreading their political ideology," which in practice involves systematic support for radical Islam. Zarate told Besson, "The Muslim Brotherhood is a group that worries us not because it deals with philosophical or ideological ideas but because it defends the use of violence against civilians."

"The Project" is a roadmap for achieving the installation of Islamic regimes in the West via propaganda, preaching, and, if necessary, war. It's the same idea expressed by Sheikh Qaradawi in 1995 when he said, "We will conquer Europe, we will conquer America, not by the sword but by our *Dawa* [proselytizing]."

Thus, "The Project" calls for "putting in place a watchdog system for monitoring the [Western] media to warn all Muslims of the dangers and international plots fomented against them." Another long-term effort is to "put in place [among Muslims in the West] a parallel society where the group is above the individual, godly authority above human liberty, and the holy scripture above the laws."

A European secret service agent interviewed by Besson explains that "the project is going to be a real danger in ten years: We'll see the emergence of a parallel system, the creation of 'Muslim Parliaments.' Then the slow destruction of our institutions will begin."

One point emphasized in "The Project" is that Muslims must constantly work to support Islamic *Dawa* and all the groups around the globe engaged in jihad. Also vital is to "keep the *Ummah* [the Muslim community] in a jihad frame of mind" and—no surprise here—"to breed a feeling of resentment towards the Jews and refuse any form of coexistence with them." (On February 2, *At-Tajdid*, a Moroccan Islamist daily close to the Brotherhood, explained to its readers that the Danish cartoons were "a Zionist provocation aimed at reviving the conflict between the West and the Muslim nation.")

By inflaming a controversy such as the current one, the Muslim Brotherhood attempts to widen the rift between the West and Islam. It specifi-

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cally targets Muslim communities living in the West, aiming to radicalize their moderate elements by continually pointing out the supposed "Islamophobia" all around them. Right on cue, the Saudi daily *Al Watan* reports that the Council of Islamic Countries decided in December to create a worldwide Islamophobia watchdog organization that will lobby for the adoption of "anti-Islamophobia" laws, as well as promoting a common position against states or organizations it sees as attacking Islam.

Under the scheme outlined in "The Project," the Muslim Brotherhood would seek to become the indispensable interlocutor of Western governments on issues relating not only to Islam but also to international issues touching the Islamic world, notably the Israeli-Arab conflict, the war in Iraq, and even the war on terror.

The same approach turns up in Qaradawi's 1990 book *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*. Qaradawi sees the presence of large Muslim populations in the West as a major opportunity. For him, "the Islamic presence" in the West is necessary "to defend the interests of the Muslim Nation and the land of Islam against the hostility and disinformation of anti-Islamic movements." He actually calls on Western Muslim communities to reform their host countries.

The cartoon jihad has been a godsend for Islamists throughout the world. For the past year, Muslim lobbies in Europe have been pushing for the adoption of blasphemy laws by the United Nations, the European Union, and the nations of Europe. Predictably, Qaradawi endorsed this cause in his sermon of February 3 (translated and posted on the web by the Middle East Media Research Institute): "The governments must be pressured to demand that the U.N. adopt a clear resolution or law that categorically prohibits affronts to prophets." Like the cartoon jihad, it is a ploy straight out of the Muslim Brotherhood playbook—and, most worryingly, a move likely to have strong appeal to Muslim moderates. ♦

Laugh Riot

Fun and games in Europe.

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

I AM JUST NOW CHOPPING UP my Danish modern coffee table and throwing the pieces into the fireplace. I want to show my support for Muslims outraged by publication of Prophet Muhammad caricatures in Denmark's *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper. All over the Muslim world there are riots and boycotts of Danish products. And I join the Muslims in solidarity (although, come on, you're Muslims, you shouldn't be drinking Carlsberg anyway). Next into the flames go my kids' Legos, invented in Denmark. They'll be followed by the satisfying smash of my wife's Royal Copenhagen dinner plates.

I haven't actually looked at the satirical drawings. Mainstream American media, recognizing that the First Amendment encompasses the right to shut up, have left them unpublished. I guess I could find them on the Internet except our computer was attached to Bang & Olufsen speakers. I seem to have crashed the system while yanking wires. But I'm sure these depictions of Muhammad will infuriate me as much as they infuriate Muslims, if for somewhat different reasons. The cartoons are badly drawn and not very funny. I know that sight unseen, because the cartoons are European.

I feel sorry for the angry mobs setting fire to the embassies. They should at least have gotten a good chuckle before they set out with their matches and gas cans. However, on a personal and professional note, I want to thank the angry mobs for showing up. I've put in some time as a satirist myself. It is the fondest dream of every wiseacre to get a really dramatic reaction from the public. Nothing is as disheartening to a humorist as having his most sardonic jibes, his most telling thrusts "laughed off." And the violent protests against Denmark, which have now become violent protests against almost all the nations of Old Europe, prove that humor truly is a form of communication that transcends all languages and cultures. The Europeans have made their little joke. The Muslims get it.

What sort of reaction did *Jyllands-Posten* expect to its comic strip? Europeans consider Americans stupid, but if the *Washington-Posten* printed a cartoon showing Martin Luther King in a Sambo get-up being chased around a palm tree by the tiger of identity politics, Don Graham would know what happens next.

That the Europeans didn't think anything would happen illustrates the state of European thought. Ideas have consequences, as Europeans, of all people, should know. Consider the dire consequences of their previous ideas, such as nationalism, colonialism, Marxism, anti-Semitism, Freudian analysis, and the social welfare state. But Europeans just keep having deep thoughts that never include anything so obvious as "God exists" or "faith is powerful." According to *Jyllands-Posten*'s cultural editor, Fleming Rose, the Muhammad caricatures were

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inspired by the comments of a Danish comedian (that transcendent form of communication again!) who said he had no problem urinating on the Bible but wouldn't dare do so on the Koran. The Danes might want to examine the first part of that statement before labeling other people's religious sensibilities "extremist."

I'd also like to thank the angry mobs for giving the Europeans a lesson in free speech. Europeans are unclear on the concept. It's against the law in Germany to deny the Holocaust. (A little late, I'd say.) Many European countries have laws against "hate speech" that don't seem too different in intent from what Muslim protesters want to do to Danish cartoonists—although the penalty phase of the trial probably would be less dramatic in Europe. Europeans suppose free speech is harmless—nattering in cafés. Americans know that the right to self-expression, like the right to bear arms, is dangerous. That's why we keep a firm grip on those rights. In America the worst kind of people can shoot their mouths off. And they can get shot.

Not shooting the worst kind of people is, of course, the cornerstone of European foreign policy. Now we see the fruits of this nuanced and sophisticated diplomacy all over the Muslim world. I haven't been so satisfied by a policy outcome since half the cars in France were set on fire last year. But if the past is anything to go by, the Europeans will learn nothing from any of this. (Although the French are these days, maybe, less inclined to ridicule the American obsession with finding a good parking place.)

The Europeans are the perfect target. They could have helped bring freedom, democracy, and law to the Muslim world, but they'd rather be smartasses. Meanwhile, my family and I will be participating in a little religious extremism ourselves this weekend—or so going to church is regarded by many Europeans. And after Mass we won't be eating Danishes. We'll be having "Prophet Pastries." ♦

Birth of a Gerrymander

The Supreme Court has a chance to bring sanity to voting rights law. BY ABIGAIL THERNSTROM

On March 1, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in a case involving the Texas congressional redistricting plan engineered in 2003 by former House majority leader Tom DeLay. Appellants charge both that the Texas map was partisan districting run amok and that it violated the right of minority voters, under the Voting Rights Act, to elect the candidates of their choice.

On the first matter, court precedents are sparse; the High Court has been understandably reluctant to tackle partisan gerrymandering, with the result that no constitutional standards (beyond one person, one vote) govern the process. But on the second matter, where precedents are numerous and murky, the Court should seize the opportunity to begin restoring intelligibility and common sense to an area of law that seems to have come unmoored from American principle.

That there is work for the Court to do is obvious to anyone familiar with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent amendments by Congress and interpretations by the Department of Justice and the courts. These have brought us to a pass where fairness to minorities has a legal definition so arcane and counterintuitive as to seem like something out of *Through the Looking Glass*. To underline the need for serious repair work by the High Court, it is worth revisiting one of the key precedents of recent years—*Georgia* v. *Ashcroft* (2003)—as well as a private, internal Department of Justice memo leaked to the press shortly before Christmas and revealing department staff-attorneys' tortured attempt to apply the *Georgia* precedent to the question of the legality of Texas's 2003 proposed redistricting.

When the Voting Rights Act was originally passed, every provision served the same simple aim: to make sure previously disfranchised southern blacks could register and vote. That simplicity proved unsustainable. The year before the act was passed, the Supreme Court had signaled concern with the "inalienable right" of every citizen to "full and effective participation" and "an equally effective voice" in its landmark one person, one vote decision, *Reynolds* v. *Sims*. By the early 1970s, protection against the "dilution" of black votes had been incorporated into judicial interpretations of the Voting Rights Act.

When were black votes diluted? In applying the statute, both the Justice Department (the main player) and the U.S. district court for the District of Columbia initially assumed that only black officeholders could fully represent black voters. Thus, black voters had "an equally effective voice" only when a districting plan contained as many safe black seats as could possibly be drawn. That view produced extremes of racial gerrymandering—the infamous spider-shaped districts—that, starting in 1993, ceased to sit well

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with a majority on the Supreme Court. In *Miller* v. *Johnson* (1995), for instance, the Court fretted about states' assigning voters to racially separate districts on the "offensive and demeaning assumption that voters of a particular race, because of their race, 'think alike, share the same political interests, and will prefer the same candidates at the polls.'"

In 2003, in *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft*, the Court added another concern to that of racial stereotyping. Perhaps black votes were being "wasted" in what the ACLU approvingly referred to as "max-black" districts. That is, perhaps the goal should be to concentrate only as many blacks in a district as necessary to elect a black representative, then to assign black voters beyond that number to other districts. The concern applied as well to Hispanic districts, Hispanics having been added as a protected group in 1975.

Potentially wasted votes were the central theme of *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft*, which involved districting for the Georgia senate. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's opinion for a majority of five was a classic study in just how lost courts can become when trying to sort out questions of racial fairness and political representation.

In her opinion, O'Connor woke up to the fact that minority "representation" is not so easy to define. Who counts as a "representative"? The question is fundamental, because section 5 of the Voting Rights Act—the provision at issue in the *Georgia* case—protects black voters from any change in electoral rules or district lines that results in representational "backsliding." The object was to prevent states from changing their electoral rules in ways that chipped away at blacks' political strength. Section 5 requires the southern states (with their history of disfranchising blacks), as well as Texas, Arizona, and scattered counties elsewhere identified by a statistical trigger, to obtain approval ("preclearance") from either the Justice Department or the U.S. district court for the District of Columbia for any redistricting.

Georgia's senate districting plan required preclearance. It lowered the percentage of black voters in some districts (although not below 50 percent), but increased the number of districts certain to elect white Democrats. This was an unusual legislative step, but Justice O'Connor explained the logic. "No party contests that a substantial majority of black voters in Georgia vote Democratic," she wrote, and thus any increase in the number of Democratic state senators—even if they were white—would boost minority representation. Correspondingly, the implication was, any decrease in the number of Republican legislators would be good for blacks.

In other words, white Democrats count as minority "representatives." It was a remarkable *legal* conclusion for the Court to reach.

Before *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft*, majority-black districts were sacrosanct; they couldn't be eliminated in a new map. That's still true. But the logic of O'Connor's opinion makes all existing Democratic districts that contain a significant number of blacks equally untouchable, since the assumption is that Democrats speak for the interests of blacks.

With *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft*, the Voting Rights Act became not just a charter for black enfranchisement and office-holding but also a statute to protect certain safe seats for white Democrats. Never mind that Georgia is majority-Republican (58 percent of its voters went for George W. Bush in 2004); Democratic districts in which blacks are an "influence" (the Court's term) appear to have become another permanent entitlement.

On the other hand, in trying to figure out whether a new districting map would diminish minority representation, lower courts, Justice Department attorneys, and the states could not simply count heads—those of white and minority officeholders who could be said to "represent" black and Hispanic interests. As O'Connor explained, "The ability of

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minority voters to elect a candidate of their choice is important but often complex in practice to determine." In fact, in calculating the level of "minority representation," there were factors to be weighed even beyond whether a white incumbent was "sympathetic to the interests of minority voters"—factors such as whether a white incumbent occupied a position of legislative power.

Here we have arrived at the equivalent of Justice Potter Stewart's famous definition of pornography: You know minority representation when you see it. The majority opinion in *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft* is a nightmare; it provides no coherent legal standards. Within the majority of five, only Justice Clarence Thomas kept his wits about him. He concurred with the Court's bottom line—remanding the case for further consideration in light of the majority opinion. But he reiterated his belief that his colleagues had "immersed the federal courts in a hopeless project of weighing questions of political theory." Even worse, by segregating voters "into racially designated districts . . . [they had] collaborated in what may aptly be termed the racial 'balkaniz[ation]' of the Nation."

The thicket of confusion that the Court created in *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft* is fully apparent in the Justice Department staff memo written a few months later and leaked to the press in late 2005. It recommended that the attorney general reject the 2003 Texas congressional districting map. The attorney general's subsequent decision to approve that map was resented by the career attorneys, eventually resulting in the leak.

The 73-page memo took up the question of the legality of the Texas map in light of *Georgia* v. *Ashcroft*. Both Texas and the Justice staff attorneys agreed that a new plan must not reduce the number of districts that sent blacks or Hispanics to Congress. One matter in dispute was whether three districts where white Democrats had been elected could be altered. Texas argued these districts were not sacred—that they were not among the districts that must be protected in calculating fair minority representation. That is, they need not "provide minority voters with the ability to elect candidates of choice." The authors of the memo had a different view.

The first of the three disputed districts—number 24 under the old plan—was majority-white in voting-age population. It had elected Martin Frost, whom the memo depicted as a "candidate of choice" for minority voters because he was "responsive" to their interests. He was also the dean of the Texas congressional delegation and thus a political powerhouse. Here we see the first fruit of *Georgia*: a white Democrat entitled to his seat under the Voting Rights Act because he is said to represent minority voters.

The second of the three districts—number 25—had been represented by Chris Bell. The memo argued that Bell, too, was "responsive" to black and Hispanic interests and therefore that his district should be left as it was, even though the designers of the 2003 plan deemed their new District 9 more likely to elect a black. Time would bear them out: In the 2004 election, held under the new district lines, District 9 elected Al Green, adding a third black congressman to the Texas delegation. Throughout the memo, the career attorneys attempted to read political tea leaves, predicting the race or political sympathies of candidates to be elected from the various districts under the new plan. It was a practice invited by Justice O'Connor's opinion, but, as the example of District 9 suggests, attorneys in Washington were (inevitably) not very good at it.

The third district, number 29, had been represented by Gene Green. But Rep. Green, the memo said, quoting a Houston city councilman, was "basically Hispanic himself." It was an interesting description. In the Jim Crow South, white civil rights workers were often depicted as "black." And there are blacks who are trashed by their political enemies as "white." In the memo, some whites are, well, not really white. It will come as no surprise that according to the staff attorneys, Rep. Henry Bonilla does not count as a Hispanic because he is a Republican.

A disastrous Supreme Court opinion cannot be held entirely responsible for the ideologically driven work of career attorneys in the Justice Department, but it did give those attorneys permission to spin a tale based on highly dubious assumptions about racial identity and minority representation.

The questions before the Court on March 1—arising from several combined cases—are much the same as those discussed in the leaked memo. The brief for the United States filed in the Texas case focuses entirely on race-related questions, on the assumption that some minimum clarity in voting rights law is desperately needed. The briefs submitted by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and other civil rights groups representing minority plaintiffs only confirm the need for a fresh and hard judicial look at the legal standards governing the Voting Rights Act. All players in this drama have strayed far from the bedrock idea of eliminating black disfranchisement. All of them must at some level know what even Justice O'Connor acknowledged: that the race-driven districting that has become pervasive—and accepted by both left and right—is harmful.

"Racial classifications with respect to voting carry particular dangers," Justice O'Connor wrote in 1993. "Racial gerrymandering, even for remedial purposes, may balkanize us into competing racial factions; it threatens to carry us further from the goal of a political system in which race no longer matters—a goal that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments embody, and to which the Nation continues to aspire." Well said, and too soon forgotten. ♦

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Democratic Insecurities

Can they win an election by ignoring national security? BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

RICHARD GEPHARDT was fuming. It was January 19, 2002, and the House minority leader was addressing the annual meeting of the Democratic National Committee in Washington, D.C. The day before, Bush adviser Karl Rove, addressing the Republicans' annual meeting in Austin, Texas, had said that American voters "trust the Republican party to do a better job of protecting and strengthening America's military might and thereby protecting America." Gephardt had the same reaction to the Rove speech as Terry McAuliffe's, the DNC chairman, who called it "despicable."

"It's a shameful statement," Gephardt said of Rove's highlighting the national security issue. "It has no place in this time and place. I hope the president will set the record straight. We've got to stand together against terrorism. This is not a partisan issue." Then Gephardt moved on, returning to his central theme—the rocky state of the U.S. economy.

Four years later, Gephardt is gone as minority leader, McAuliffe is gone as Democratic chairman, the economy is growing, Rove is still at the president's side, and Republicans have picked up seats in the House and Senate in two consecutive elections. In both 2002 and 2004, voters told exit pollsters that the war on terror was a top concern. And voters, while disapproving of the president's handling of Iraq, continue to give him sizable support when it comes to the fight against terror in general.

Unsurprisingly, then, at the 2006 gathering of the Republican National Committee on January 20, Rove said that national security again topped the list of issues in the midterm elections. Rove emphasized Iraq ("We hear a loud chorus of Democrats who want us to cut and run in Iraq."), the Patriot Act ("Republicans want to renew the Patriot Act—and Democrat leaders take special delight in proclaiming they've killed it."), and the administration's warrantless domestic surveillance program. ("President Bush believes if al Qaeda is calling somebody in America, it is in our national security interest to know who they're calling and why. Some important Democrats clearly disagree.") His rhetoric was unapologetically partisan.

How will Democrats defend themselves against this line of attack? I spent most of last week speaking to Democratic congressmen and strategists, and still don't know the answer. Most think national security and foreign policy will count for a lot less this year than in the recent past.

"The 2006 election won't just be about national security," Rep. Dan Boren, an Oklahoma Democrat, told me. Donna Brazile, the former Gore campaign manager, said she wouldn't "bet the kitchen sink on one issue." Former Clinton adviser Dick Morris wrote in an email that "unless Bush fails—and there is a new terror attack on the United States—or the Democrats succeed in emasculating the Patriot Act and the NSA wiretapping—security will not be the major issue in 2006." And a New York-based consultant with close ties to Hillary Clinton said that "there are other issues—corruption, some of the economic issues—that may take precedence."

A second line of argument is that national security may work *against* the Republicans. That depends, of course, on whether the major issue on Election Day is the war in Iraq, on which Democrats maintain an advantage, or the war on terror, on which the GOP trounces the opposition.

Thomas Schaller, a professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, thinks 2006 will be "the first test of whether the country has moved against the Republicans on Iraq, wiretapping, and so on." Schaller suspects such a move has occurred. One Democratic foreign policy analyst suggested the Bush foreign policy coalition, made up of "Wilsonian" idealists and "Jacksonian" nationalists, may be in a state of collapse. The New York Democrat told me, "The president doesn't have the credibility on this issue that he did four years ago."

To one independent, however, all this sounds like wishful thinking. The Democrats have "done more damage" to their national security credentials "in the last three months than in the last 20 years," Marshall Wittmann, a fellow at the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, told me. Wittmann pointed to Pennsylvania Democrat John Murtha's call for immediate withdrawal from Iraq, which was seconded by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; Howard Dean's statement last winter that "we can't win" in Iraq; Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid's telling activists he was proud to have "killed the Patriot Act"; and the party's sometimes hysterical response to the NSA surveillance controversy. Wittmann jokes that top Democrats suffer from "Bush-Tourette's Syndrome"—their hostility to all things Bush causing spontaneous, damaging outbursts. "They believe that Bush is the major threat," Wittmann says. "There's a certain sentiment that we're not engaged in a war on terror."

Wittmann may be overstating the case. And yet it is true that many Democrats now simply trivialize or ignore the national security issue. In their new book, *Take It Back*, former Clinton advisers James Carville and

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Paul Begala acknowledge that "we Democrats have a national security problem"—only to turn around and call the Iraq war a "brain fart," and facetiously suggest recruiting College Republicans to send to Iraq. "Maybe we should let them form their own divisions," the two write. "The Fighting Frat Boys or the 102nd Trust Funders."

Historian Rick Perlstein, in his widely touted *The Stock Ticker and the Superjumbo: How the Democrats Can Once Again Become America's Dominant Political Party*, asserts that "recent failures in Iraq point out just how threadbare the old stereotypes about wimpy Democrats and muscular Republicans remain," arguing instead that his party's recent losses stem from its abandonment of "economic populism." Political scientists Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, in their acclaimed book *Off Center*, devote only a few paragraphs to national security, writing that the central question facing America today is, How have Republicans "managed to keep the divisive aspects of their domestic agenda"—which is to say, tax cuts—"from distracting public attention from . . . post-9/11 themes?"

There is evidence that some Democrats believe the party's security deficit to be a problem. Last Wednesday, a political action committee called Band of Brothers held a rally at the National Mall where the 50-plus veterans running for office this year as Democrats protested the alleged "Swift-boating" of Murtha. The idea behind Band of Brothers is that biography trumps policy; that an antiwar candidate might assuage voters' concerns about terrorism because he (or she) is a veteran. But this approach has not yet borne fruit: witness the recent political failures of Max Cleland, Wesley Clark, John Kerry, and Paul Hackett, the antiwar Ohio Democrat who (barely) lost to Representative Jean Schmidt in a special election last summer. This year, Hackett is running for the Senate. "You could call it a strategy from weakness," said political scientist Schaller, referring to the Democrats' veteran recruitment efforts.

AP / Susan Walsh

Karl Rove, with Tennessee senators Bill Frist and Lamar Alexander, February 1

Another approach looks for issues where Democrats might claim to outhawk Republicans. Rep. Christopher Van Hollen, a Maryland Democrat, suggests that his party address the White House's inability to follow the strictures of the 9/11 Commission, which continues to issue "report cards" on American homeland security efforts. Van Hollen further suggests that Democrats should push to contain the spread of nuclear weapons through bulk purchasing of old Soviet warheads, and tack to the right of the administration on Afghanistan. In an interview, Van Hollen criticized the White House's plan to reduce the number of American troops there. "We need to make sure that Afghanistan does not become a failed state," he said.

There is little debate, even among Republicans, that today's political landscape favors the Democrats if national security is off the table. The issues that remain—the clumsy design and implementation of the Medicare prescription drug benefit, accusations of corruption stemming from the investigation into the lobbyist Jack Abramoff, cuts in entitlements, energy prices—all work against the president and his party. And even if national security stays on the table, it is no sure bet that the GOP is better off.

Voters are sophisticated enough to understand that a vote for a representative or senator will have no discernible effect on U.S. foreign policy, over which the president wields so much control. One Republican consultant told me that the danger for Bush is the perception that Iraq is, for lack of a better term, a "no win war." The consultant pointed out that a similar perception hurt incumbent presidents Truman in 1950 and 1952 and Johnson in 1966. Moreover, recent polling shows a growing discontent with the status quo—a discontent that can only harm the party that controls Congress.

But any landscape is subject to storms and earthquakes. When Rove addressed the RNC in 2002, leading members of both parties thought the dominant issue of the midterm elections would be the economic downturn. Back then, President Bush initially opposed the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and the war on terror was limited to the rout of the Taliban in Afghanistan. By October, however, Bush had embraced a new domestic security department—thereby trapping Democrats beholden to public employees' unions—and had introduced a bill authorizing the use of force against Iraq.

The Democrats were split. Eager to return to safe ground, they evaded the core issue of which party is best equipped to wield American power, and the Republicans made historic gains. Cautions the New York Democrat: "The election is never when you want it to be." ♦

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Blueprint for the Iraqi Insurgency

What happened to the "treasure trove" of documents from Saddam's foreign ministry? BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

IN LATE APRIL 2003, some two weeks after the world watched jubilant Iraqis and U.S. Marines topple the tall statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad's Firdos Square, a small group of American officials began the thankless and dangerous task of recreating the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The team, led by Ambassador David Dunford, had been eager to get into the ministry sooner. They were told, however, that there were not yet enough U.S. troops in the Iraqi capital to secure that neighborhood. So they waited.

When the Americans saw a BBC reporter broadcasting live from inside the ministry, or MoFA as it became known, they pushed to get a military escort so that they might begin their job. It worked.

This small team soon got bigger—adding a military civil affairs officer, Iraqi-Americans under contract with the Pentagon, a British foreign service officer, a Romanian diplomat, and several Iraqis who had worked for the MoFA under Saddam Hussein.

In interviews, several of them described the ministry when they arrived. The building had been looted, stripped of many fixtures and even some of its electrical wiring. Iraqis described as "militias" were living in makeshift barracks on the ground floor.

The looting was haphazard and opportunistic, but the destruction of documents and torching of offices appeared to be well-planned. Still, some important items survived. Among the papers the MoFA team discovered was a map of the ministry with names of ministry officials and the suites they occupied. Offices of several senior officials had been severely damaged by fire; in others the team found piles of papers sitting untouched in the middle of the rooms, apparently awaiting destruction.

Last summer, almost by accident, I spoke to an Iraqi who had been in the ministry in those early days. I had sought him out to discuss another subject when he rather casually mentioned two documents the Americans had recovered. One was a memo from the director of Iraqi Intelligence, the Mukhabarat, from February 2003, with instructions to senior regime and intelligence officials in anticipation of a U.S. invasion. The other was a long list of jihadists who had been brought to Iraq before the war. I called around to check on his claims and received only vague confirmations of the documents' existence. No one else I spoke with had seen the documents or could provide more specific information, so I didn't report on them.

Then I saw Paul Bremer, former head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, interviewed about his new book *My Year in Iraq* on the January 15 *Meet the Press*. Host Tim Russert asked Bremer about a document he describes in the book.

Said Russert: "You went back to Iraq, and they found a memo which they presented to you about the insurgency and again, it's in your book and this is a very important document. It's quite interesting." Russert read Bremer's words: "The document . . . listed orders for point-by-point strategy to be implemented after the probable collapse of the regime beginning with the order of 'Burn this office.' I read the translation. It did indeed call for a strategy of organized resistance which included the classic pattern of forming cells and training combatants in insurgency. 'Operatives' were to engage in 'sabotage and looting.' Random sniper attacks, ambushes to be organized. The order continued, 'scatter agents to every town. Destroy electric power stations and water conduits. Infiltrate the mosques, the Shiite holy places.'"

The contents of the document were virtually identical to the one described to me by the Iraqi, but Bremer told me he didn't know where the Mukhabarat document was found. At the suggestion of an Iraqi source, I called Ambassador Dunford and asked him about the Mukhabarat document Bremer describes in his book.

Said Dunford: "We pulled stuff out of there very early on. We gave it to something they were calling the fusion cell in the palace [CPA headquarters], but those guys just couldn't handle it. We never got a good sense of what was in all of the documents other than what we translated on the spot."

Dunford said he thought he had heard of a document like the Mukhabarat document but didn't remember any of the details. Then, without prompting, he added this: "I do remember one document that we found that was a list of jihadists, for want of a better word, coming into Iraq from Saudi Arabia before the war. That suggested to me that Saddam was planning the insurgency before the war."

The Iraqi who had described the jihadist document to me indicated that "hundreds and hundreds" of these fighters had come from several countries in the region including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan and Syria. So I asked Dunford about this. "It may have been that folks in Saudi Arabia—not the Saudi government—were organizing these jihadists from elsewhere and sending them into Iraq."

Dunford is hardly a Bush adminis-

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tration apologist. In an August 25, 2004, interview published by the U.S. Institute of Peace, he criticizes many aspects of the U.S. presence in Iraq and piles scorn on the "ideological" aspects of the reconstruction. And in a speech before the war, Dunford was highly critical of Bush administration policy in the Middle East.

Documents such as the one allegedly listing jihadists in Iraq raise more questions than they answer. Who are these jihadists? Where did they receive their training? What was their relationship to the Iraqi regime before the war? Which "folks in Saudi Arabia" made arrangements for their travel to Iraq? How many of them have been captured or killed in Iraq? Are we even keeping track? What have they told interrogators about the insurgency?

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And about the early cooperation between foreign fighters and the broader Baathist networks?

Interesting questions. But let's back up: Does the U.S. intelligence community even know it has this document? If so, do the counter-insurgency teams in Iraq have this information? We know that less than 3 percent of the overall document take from Afghanistan and Iraq has been exploited. Is this document part of that small fraction of exploited data, or part of the much larger mass of information that sits unexamined on U.S. government hard drives and in warehouses in Doha, Qatar?

Senior U.S. intelligence officials tell THE WEEKLY STANDARD that they are working from lists like the one found in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What remains unclear is what happened to the other materials collected at that ministry. Among them, according to officials who were in the MoFA in April 2003, were 16 or 17 floppy disks from the personal computer of Naji Sabri al-Hadithi's office manager. Sabri was Iraq's minister of foreign affairs from August 2001 through March 2003. As his important position might suggest, he was close to Saddam Hussein. A cursory field-examination of the disks suggests they might be quite valuable to those interested in understanding the activities of the Iraqi regime in the months and years leading up to the U.S. invasion. They included Sabri's personal correspondence with other senior Iraqi regime officials, his talking points for meetings with U.N. inspectors, and other documents described simply as "position papers."

In those early days of the new Iraq, according to an American official working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a "very reliable source" provided U.S. intelligence officials with several compact discs. The CDs contained correspondence between senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and Iraqi embassies throughout the world from January 1, 2003, through the eve of war in mid-March 2003. This material is potentially even more significant than it sounds, when one considers that Iraq, like many other countries, used its embassies to run its foreign intelligence operations. Have these documents been exploited? What do they tell us?

One day after the floppy disks from Naji Sabri's office manager were passed to a representative of "another U.S. government agency"—presumably the CIA—the recipient reported back that the find was "a treasure trove." That was the last that any of these officials have heard about the recovered documents.

It may be that documents like the list of jihadists should not be released to the American public. It's harder to make that case about the documents found in Naji Sabri's office. And what about the nearly 2 million captured Iraqi documents that have not yet been exploited? Representative Pete Hoekstra, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has continued to press the case for freeing the documents with both the Defense Intelligence Agency and the director of national intelligence, John Negroponte. In November, Hoekstra requested 40 Iraqi documents from the U.S. intelligence community. Three weeks ago, Hoekstra received 39 of those documents—some 3,000 pages of information—in two large cardboard boxes. His staff is reviewing the documents and Hoekstra is pushing both the DIA and DNI to allow him to release them to the public.

A spokesman for Negroponte says the documents provided to Hoekstra are "FOUO," for official use only, and are "still being reviewed for any sensitive intelligence-related information that might result in reclassification. They are, therefore, not for public release." For now, anyway.

Hoekstra says that he hopes these documents—again, just a fraction of the nearly 2 million Saddam-era documents in the possession of the U.S. government—will be released within two weeks. Nearly three years after the U.S. invasion, and with the nature of the deposed Iraqi regime still the subject of a highly politicized debate, it will be none too soon. ♦

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Driving Mister Mugabe

Africa's tariff hypocrisy.

BY MARIAN L. TUPY

AFP

President Mugabe arrives for the opening of parliament in Harare, June 9, 2005

WHERE FREE TRADE is the word, hypocrisy is never far behind. Rich countries preach the virtues of open markets, while enforcing tariffs to protect industries (agriculture usually) at home. And poor countries call on richer ones to change their protectionist ways while constructing their own, even more counterproductive, anti-import regulations. The main difference is that the people who live in poor countries, of course, suffer the most as a result of such regulations.

African leaders, in particular, are known to urge an end to protectionism abroad, while maintaining in their own countries tariffs four and a half times those imposed by richer countries. Such prohibitive trade barriers do help keep cheap goods out, though somehow a trickle of duty-free luxury items always finds their way to the lawmakers themselves, though not any of the countrymen they claim to be looking out for. Indeed, the people who claim that protection of domestic producers is necessary for the good of the country are usually the same people who find a way to still enjoy the benefits of free trade. This has always been the case, not just in Africa.

Take "Napoléon: An Intimate Portrait," a recent exhibition at the National Geographic Museum in Washington. It featured some 250 objects belonging to the former French emperor and those who were close to him. In the collection was a document, signed by Napoleon himself, permitting a French merchant ship to sail for Great Britain. The ship was to pick up purchases made on behalf of Empress Josephine, who had a penchant for British goods. The permit was necessary because of Napoleon's decree from 1806 prohibiting the European territories under his control from trading with Britain. Clearly, the imperial family was not expected to share the hardships that the trade embargo imposed on the rest of Napoleonic Europe.

One and a half centuries later, Joseph Stalin sought to purge the Soviet Union of foreign influences. All trade was controlled by the Soviet government. Importing Western literature and movies for mass consumption was strictly forbidden. But, according to Simon Sebag Montefiore's book *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, Stalin took in many a foreign film. He thought they were far superior to those made in the USSR. Stalin especially enjoyed watching westerns that featured Spencer Tracy and Clark Gable. (He liked John Wayne, too, but ordered his assassination because of Wayne's strident anti-communism. Nikita Khrushchev, Stalin's successor, who met the American movie star in 1958, told Wayne that he had "rescinded the order.")

As in Napoleonic France and Stalinist Russia, so in Africa today. Kenyan members of parliament, for example, earn salaries of about $130,000 a year. That is more than the salaries earned by members of parliament in Great Britain—a country with a gross national product that, in dollars, came to $33,940 per person in 2004. In the same year, Kenya's GNP per person was $460. Kenyan MPs also receive many generous allowances, including $46,000 for the purchase of a tariff-free car.

Strikingly, in November 2005, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a taxpayer-funded offshoot of the U.S.

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government designed to aid "deserving" poor countries, has upgraded Kenya to "threshold" status. That means Kenya is well on the way to receiving more money in U.S. aid.

Even more outrageous is the example of Zimbabwe—a sorry country run as a personal fiefdom by Robert Mugabe. Mugabe, the man who gave Zimbabwe 500 percent inflation, 80 percent unemployment, and widespread famine, has taken a lesson in cronyism from Kenya. According to the *Zimbabwe Independent*, "lawmakers in the lower and upper chambers—who now number up to 216—will each get US $22,000 to import a vehicle under parliament's car loan facility. This means US $4,752,000 will be spent on vehicle allowances." All of those vehicles, the paper reported, will be imported duty-free.

Duty-free treatment by the Zimbabwean authorities, it should be mentioned, proved much harder to obtain for a group of South African churches and nongovernmental organizations that raised money to purchase emergency aid for the people of Zimbabwe in the winter months of 2005. While the South African food and blankets languished at the Johannesburg airport, the Zimbabwean government demanded that an import tariff be paid.

Many African leaders have called for further trade liberalization. Referring to the September 2005 summit of leaders at the United Nations, South African president Thabo Mbeki complained that the meeting had not achieved the necessary breakthrough on trade. "How serious is the developed world about this partnership to address this matter of poverty?" he asked. The real question that ought to be on the lips of all those concerned with poverty in Africa is, "How serious are the African governments in addressing the problem of poverty in their own countries?" Not very serious, is the answer, for as long as African governments persist in maintaining import tariffs on foreign goods, the vast majority of Africans will only be able to dream about cheap imports from overseas. ♦

Hillary Won't Run

That's my prediction, and I'm sticking to it.

BY DOUGLAS MACKINNON

BACK IN NOVEMBER 1999, I wrote a column for the *San Francisco Examiner* in which I basically guaranteed that Hillary Clinton would not run for the Senate in New York. I laid out a very clever rationale for why she would not enter the race, the main thrust being that her candidacy was really just a red herring devised to deflect attention from her husband's mounting ethical problems.

I was so sure of my pet theory that I proceeded to make lunch and dinner bets with any number of people in Washington. Bets that, to this day, I am still paying off.

So with that lesson well learned, I am here to say that Senator Hillary Clinton will not run for president in 2008. Guaranteed. Why? Because, from the Democratic party's point of view, it makes no sense for her to run. I'm talking, none.

I am a Republican who happens to have a lot of Democratic friends. That's the way it goes when you come from Dorchester, Massachusetts. And what most of these Democratic friends of mine tell me for private consumption is that their party is really, really, really desperate to win back the White House, and in their minds, for that to happen, Hillary Clinton has to get out of the way.

Their rationale, not mine, is that they don't think enough Americans, especially American women, are actually going to vote for Senator Clinton in a general election. While I'm no fan of polls, a recent CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll would seem to indicate that these Democratic friends of mine are on to something. When asked, only 16 percent of respondents said they would "definitely" vote for Hillary Clinton, while 51 percent said they would definitely not. She even lost in the poll to Condoleezza Rice, a woman who has made it crystal clear that she has no intention of running for president.

Next on the hit parade of things my Democratic friends worry about when it comes to Senator Clinton is that they really would like not to revisit the Whitewater, commodities, Monica, Lincoln Bedroom, Hillarycare days. Some of them worry, rightly in my opinion, that if Mrs. Clinton runs, all of this old, unpleasant, and somewhat unresolved baggage is going to be run on a loop by certain conservative, Christian, and even Democratic groups. The obvious question of these friends being: "Why should our party relive that pain?"

All Democrats I speak with on this subject, and even a surprisingly large number of Republicans, think 2008 is shaping up as a pretty good year for the Democrats to take back the White House. Part of their thinking is that even if you believe George W. Bush has been a great president (I do), and even if you really like the Republicans (I like some of them), the American people are suffering from "party in power fatigue." Namely, after eight years of Republicans in the White House, maybe it's time to send in the other team.

So, before the race even starts, one could build a case that the Democrats have a bit of a head start. Why aren't the Democrats I speak with happy

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about that news? Because they feel that if Hillary is the one carrying the baton in the general election, then she's going to collapse and get lapped by even a mediocre Republican.

Another question my Democratic friends fret about: Is Hillary enough of a team player to let someone like former governor (*southern* governor, they always say) Mark Warner of Virginia become the standard-bearer of her party? While they seem to think that she is too selfish to entertain such a thought, I'm prepared to give her more credit than that. I think, after doing the math, and calculating what's best for her in the long run, she will decide to forgo the race and wave her pom-poms from the sidelines.

She will do this, but, of course, not without exacting a steep price. Heavy is the head that wears the crown, but heavier still will be the Democratic head that has to broker the deal with Hillary to have her put her party before her lofty ambitions.

Come November 2008, Senator Clinton will be 61 years of age—16 years older than when her husband took office, but still young enough politically to make one or two more runs at the Oval Office. So, at least, will go the argument from various Democrats in the smoke-free, racially diverse, politically correct back rooms from which they plot these days against the evil GOP.

What will they offer the woman from Chicago who thought New York seemed like a nice state to represent in the Senate? I've heard, again from my Democratic buddies who will henceforth all deny knowing me, that secretary of state in the first Warner administration might be an acceptable offer. A fine résumé builder for a future race. Upon hearing that, I asked them, "Why not just put Hillary on the ticket as his vice presidential candidate?"

After a few *tsk, tsk*'s, and some shakes of the head, they remind me that they would actually like to *win* the 2008 election. Let me stress again that this is all coming from loyal, albeit desperate, Democrats. Their feeling still being that Hillary at the top or bottom of the ticket will doom them to four more years of doing without White House cufflinks and not being invited to state dinners and presidential Christmas parties.

That said, they don't rule out that Hillary is powerful enough, tough enough, and smart enough to work out a deal where she would be named vice president late in the first term or early in the second term of a Warner (or fill-in-the-blank) presidency.

I, for one, happen to think Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is highly intelligent and factors almost every decision she makes on how it will frame and then cement her place in history. Denying her party a realistic chance to win back the White House is not posterity-friendly.

It takes a village idiot to bet that Hillary won't run in 2008, and I'm that idiot. Free lunches and dinners will be paid in 2009. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Selling Out Moderate Islam

Washington's misbegotten campaign to be loved in the Middle East

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

The Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, like Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1989 fatwa against the British author Salman Rushdie and those who helped publish his *Satanic Verses*, have revealed more disturbing things about the West than they have about Muslims in Europe and the Middle East. With Rushdie, Westerners deplored the Iranian cleric's death warrant but often temporized their condemnation by suggesting that the then hard-left author had been, as the former, redoubtable *New York Times* correspondent Kennett Love once put it, "mean to Islam." (Few prominent Muslim clerics and intellectuals could bring themselves to make an unqualified condemnation of Khomeini's actions; an enormous number of Muslim clerics, intellectuals, and scholars chose to remain quiet, and in their silence there was surely often both fear and assent.)

With Denmark, the initial response of the Bush administration aligned America more with those Muslims who felt the cartoons impugned their sacred messenger than with the European press that had printed the caricatures. Sean McCormack, the assistant secretary of state for public affairs, declared, "Anti-Muslim images are as unacceptable as anti-Semitic images, as anti-Christian images, or any other religious belief." Former President Clinton echoed this sentiment while visiting the Persian Gulf emirate Qatar: "None of us are totally free of stereotypes about people of different races, different ethnic groups, and different religions. . . . There was this appalling example in northern Europe, in Denmark, . . . these totally outrageous cartoons against Islam." Senator John Kerry, too, took umbrage: "These and other inflammatory images deserve our scorn, just as the violence against embassies and military installations are an unacceptable and intolerable form of protest."

Former Democratic congressman Tim Roemer, a member of the 9/11 Commission, which was deeply worried about the woeful image of the United States in the Muslim world, articulated what many Democrats and Republicans were surely thinking but not saying: "We have done precious little to effectively communicate to the hearts and minds and win that long-term war. . . . This seems to be an opportunity to condemn the cartoons and communicate directly with the Muslim people on a host of issues." And across the Atlantic, French President Jacques Chirac, who still hasn't recovered from Muslim French youth rioting last fall, gave the most "sensitive" European response: "Anything liable to offend the beliefs of others, particularly religious beliefs, must be avoided."

Beyond the question of whether any of these men really means what he says—it's not hard to imagine Clinton, Kerry, the Anglophone Chirac, or McCormack enjoying Monty Python's relentlessly mocking, anti-Christian romps *Life of Brian* and *The Meaning of Life*—they all echo a common view about Muslim sentiments and Western policy since 9/11, and especially since the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. To wit: We need to encourage interfaith dialogue, we need to show that the West, particularly America, is not opposed to Islam, and we need to solve, or at least play down, points of friction between the West and the Islamic world. (Until the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections, this view inevitably underscored progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as indispensable to better relations.)

Anti-Americanism is the great bugaboo for these folks, and the more wonkish among them often have at their finger-tips polling data showing what a sorry state the United States is in among Muslims worldwide. A good, highly polemical example of this mindset is *The Next Attack* by Daniel Benjamin and Steve Simon, for-

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AP Photo / Lefteris Pitarakis

Muslim protesters outside the French embassy in London, February 3.

mer counterterrorist officials in the Clinton administration. In their book, Benjamin and Simon zealously use polls, and the opinions of unnamed American and European intelligence officials, to argue that the Bush administration is losing the war against Islamic holy warriors.

However well intended, this empathetic view is seriously wrong-headed. It camouflages what is really at stake in Denmark and the rest of Europe with these cartoons. This type of hearts-and-minds strategy will inevitably backfire, compromising the very Muslims that this administration and liberal Democrats would most like to see advance in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

For better or worse, expatriate and foreign-educated Middle Easterners have helped to shape decisively the secular and religious cultures that have dominated their homelands since World War II. Many of the best and brightest of the Middle East now live abroad. Many have sought greater freedom of expression and personal liberty in the West. Is it Presidents Clinton and Chirac's desire that Muslim satirists never develop because their work would be insensitive to less irreverent Muslims? In its heyday, Islamic civilization contained many heterodox and heretical strains. In particular, Shiism, always a vehicle for minority protest, was rich in movements and cultural experimentation that sometimes electrified and horrified the Sunni Muslim world.

It is possible that Muslims living outside the Middle East will have a substantial role to play in revivifying Islamic civilization—in shedding some light on the convulsive path that one may still hope will lead from dysfunctional dictatorship through bin Ladenism to more peacefully self-critical, democratic societies. If Westerners appease Muslims who countenance violent intimidation, we are doing a terrible injustice to the liberal and progressive Muslims among us, who really would like to live in lands where people can say about the Prophet Muhammad what they have said about Jesus, Mary, and Moses. Among the Muslims of the United States and Europe, if not in the Middle East, there are many who have Western cultural sentiments and wit. The irreverent, religiously skeptical Western elite has Muslim members and Middle Eastern counterparts of equal intelligence and similar tastes. Islamic civilization may yet produce its Edward Gibbon, a sincere religious voyager who ends up scrutinizing the foundations of his civilization with a skeptical, cynical, and, at times, profoundly unfair irreligious eye. It would appear that if President Clinton had his way, a Muslim Gibbon would not be welcome in the United States.

The fate of European Muslims is now openly in play. The militant Muslims of Europe who do not want their brethren to embrace the continent's liberal, thoroughly secular culture helped fuel this controversy by emailing and faxing the offending cartoons to their spiritual allies in the Middle East. Most European Muslims, like their non-Muslim compatriots, didn't notice and probably would not have cared about these caricatures, if it had not been for the activist imams in their midst.

As important, the governments of the region also took sides. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted, somewhat tardily, the Syrian and Iranian regimes are trying to exploit this event for all that it's worth. Damascus and Tehran, more closely allied than ever before, are under pressure from the West for their terrorist and nuclear ambitions, respectively. Both have responded by inciting demonstrations in Lebanon and Syria. It is a bizarre spectacle to observe the heretical Shiite-Alawite Baathist regime in Damascus—which has in the past been on the cutting edge of anti-Islamic pan-Arab nationalist propaganda and slaughtering thousands in the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood—now defend the

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AP / Lefteris Pitarakis

Protesters outside the Danish embassy in London, February 3

Prophet Muhammad from Danish despoliation.

Tehran has probably also been behind the demonstrations in Iraq. And the government-controlled media throughout the region, especially in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have not been helpful. As the French scholar Olivier Roy acutely noted in *Le Monde*, Europe is now in the cross hairs of many Middle Eastern governments for its more activist role in the region since the invasion of Iraq. The French, British, and Germans have taken the lead in trying to thwart Tehran's nuclear ambitions. France has sided with the United States against Syria in Lebanon. Most of Europe under the umbrella of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is now in Afghanistan, increasingly in combat roles against Taliban insurgents and the holy warriors of al Qaeda. And however timidly, Europe has joined the United States in calling for more open political systems in the Muslim Middle East. Democracy is an ugly word to most of the region's rulers. With official encouragement, anti-Europeanism is bound to rise throughout the area. Muslim autocrats, in conjunction with European and Middle Eastern Muslim militants, are likely to interfere increasingly in Europe's internal affairs to create fear and a more hesitant European community.

And the controversy over the Danish cartoons could conceivably betray the most important, though least remembered, player in this controversy: the average Muslim in the Middle East. Far more than most Middle Eastern Muslims and politically correct Western scholars of the region and Islam would like to admit, Western standards for individual liberty, curiosity, personal integrity, scholarship, and the political relations among men have become the defining benchmarks for Muslims everywhere, however resented or admired. If our standards collapse and give way to fear, theirs in the long-term have no chance whatsoever. The psychology of victimization—surely one of the worst gifts the Western anti-imperialist left has given the Muslim world—can only be made worse by Westerners who treat Muslims like children unable to compete and to defend their religion.

In the Middle Ages, Christian theologians said vastly worse things about the Prophet Muhammad than the Danish cartoons implied. Back then, Muslims cognizant of what the Christians were writing usually took it in stride, not too perturbed by the ruminations and calumnies of a superseded faith. Non-Muslims living beyond the writ of Islamic law were not expected to respect a prophet not their own. That is, after all, what it means to be benighted infidels.

To be healthy, Muslim pride and political systems need to be based on real accomplishments, where the average believer can feel that he is participating in a larger, productive enterprise. (In the classical and medieval Islamic eras, when Muslim armies usually defeated their non-Muslim enemies, manifestly fulfilling the divine promise that Muslims were God's chosen people, maintaining both collective and individual pride was much easier.) Western indulgence of supposed Muslim outrage over these *cartoon* insults to the prophet is pretty demeaning. It can only fortify the destructive, self-pitying impulses that all too often paralyze Muslim conversations and thought. (One of the more bizarre facts of the modern Middle East is to see the ruling Muslim elites of these countries—men and women of considerable influence and privilege—bemoan their powerlessness owing to the hidden, omnipresent, all-powerful machinations of the West, in particular, the United States.)

Lurking behind much of the American response to the Danish cartoons is a difficult, probably impossible, and certainly unnecessary short-term foreign-policy goal: improving the image of the United States among Muslims. There is perhaps nothing more debilitating for the Bush administration than to believe that anti-anti-Americanism ought to be a key component in our overseas policy. Anti-Americanism in and of itself is not a catalyst for Islamic terrorism. There are many other, vastly more important things, both historical and personal, at work inside young Muslim men (and occasionally women) who decide to kill themselves and others to express their love of God and their hatred of the United States. Muslims who loathe these holy-war killers and want to see them extirpated from their societies can often themselves dis-

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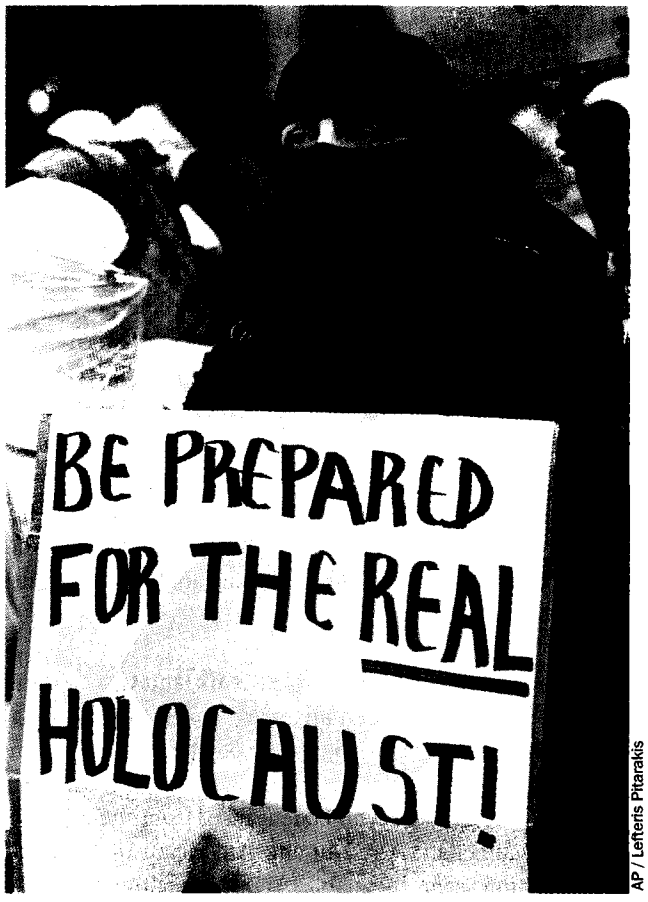
like, if not hate, the United States for a wide variety of reasons, some legitimate, some fictitious, some surreal. On the traditional side, Muhammad Sayyid at-Tantawi, the head of al-Azhar, Cairo's famous seat of Sunni Islamic learning, and Egypt's grand mufti, Ali Gomaa, would probably fall in this category. So would the European Muslim "modernist" Tariq Ramadan and many members of the Arabic Al Jazeera television network, who can marry a real hatred for bin Laden with an exuberant loathing of the United States. Iraq is chock-full of devoutly religious Shiite and Sunni Muslims who abhor suicide bombers and religious radicals in their midst yet harbor—have probably always harbored—distinctly unfriendly attitudes toward the United States.

A greater liking for the United States would not enhance the counterterrorist credentials of any of the above. In all probability, more pro-American commentary by these men would do just the opposite. The spreading of democracy in the Arab Middle East will naturally increase, not diminish, anti-Americanism. The only exceptions to this rule *may* be Iraq and Syria.

Syria is the least certain, since the Syrian wing of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood would probably do very well in any free election there. And the Brotherhood—unlike Iraq's Shiite religious parties, which have seen an American-led war against a barbarous tyrant and the enormous rise in pro-American sentiment in Shiite Iran—is consistently and deeply anti-American, as is the Brotherhood mothership in Egypt. We should not, however, be alarmed by this phenomenon. There is just too much historical baggage for the United States to overcome it quickly or easily.

Before the Bush administration, Washington usually gave unquestioning support to dictatorships in the region. And there is the little fact, always near the surface in the Muslim world but often ignored or forgotten in the United States, of nearly 1,400 years of always-competitive, often intimately antagonistic and violent, history between Christendom and Islam. There is Israel, which even the most liberal and moderate Muslims often acutely dislike. (The Jewish state is, after all, an existential insult to both Arab nationalism and Islamic pride, even for Arab Muslims who view Arab nationalism as a cultural catastrophe and view the faith as irrelevant to their lives.) And there is the very tricky issue of women, which often animates progressive, traditional, and fundamentalist conversations.

America is seen by all as a force supporting change in the dynamics between Muslim men and women. Touching the well-ordered, paternalistic home, which Muslim men, poor or rich, have always seen as a bedrock of their identity, is unavoidably convulsive. There is no way to gauge how many recruits fundamentalists have made on the women's issue since the Muslim Brotherhood formed in



AP / Lefteris Pitarakis

Marching towards the Danish embassy, London, February 3

1928. It's a decent bet that it has been a more intimate and effective message than the fraternal appeals after 1948 to eject the Jews from Israel.

American foreign policy has long been in the odd position of trying to assuage Muslim anger at Israel by advancing the peace process even though a sober analysis should have told Washington's diplomats that the fundamentalist set—the young men who are most susceptible to making the leap to suicidal holy war—did not see this process as progress. (The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections has perhaps made evident what should have been obvious for years. But the sclerotic peace-process establishment in Washington, second in influence only to the transatlanticists, may not see what Hamas has tried to write as pellucidly as possible.)

And Washington has consistently advanced, especially in the Bush administration after 9/11, the women's agenda throughout the region, another sure-fire way of angering the young men who are most likely to transmute into jihadists. American foreign policy should *never* be tailored to appease the anger of Muslim men—though, if we are to be honest, this is in part what we've been trying to do in the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation and in much of our Muslim-oriented public-diplomacy.

What is striking is that Washington has been doing the opposite of what it intends and doesn't know it. Americans

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have acted, at least on the issues of Israel and women's rights, as if the Muslim world had a liberal silent majority waiting to rise up and embrace these issues as we do. In all likelihood, this isn't so. Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani of the holy city of Najaf in Iraq, who has repeatedly saved us from potential disaster in Mesopotamia, wrote numerous fatwas after the fall of Saddam Hussein on the proper comportment and dress for female believers. In Western eyes, his conclusions would hardly be called liberal—yet his commitment to democracy in Iraq is real. (Concerning the cartoons, Sistani also strongly condemned the "misguided and oppressive" elements of the Muslim community whose actions "projected a distorted and dark image of the faith of justice, love, and brotherhood." Though no fan of the caricatures, Sistani is giving a slap to Tehran and its agents in Iraq.)

As we saw in Egypt, the West Bank, and Gaza, Sunni Muslim fundamentalists are going to be among those pushing seriously for democratic change in the Middle East, and will, as in the Palestinian territories, surely be among those who benefit most from the collapse of secular autocracy. A rise in anti-Americanism throughout the region seems inevitable. And it is healthy.

With dictatorship giving way to democracy, Muslims of various stripes will make their best case to their brethren on why they should be given a chance to govern. The religious radicalization of the Muslim body politic, which has gained ground under autocracy, will likely lose speed, if not rapidly reverse itself. Young men who feel most acutely the injustices of their societies and have the testosterone-driven determination to do something about it will have broader personal experience and a wider range of political options than to embrace just the mosque, where Muslims have usually found brave and tenacious popular heroes when they could find them nowhere else. Let us be frank: For every Said Eddin Ibrahim, a courageous secular liberal who has seen the inside of Egypt's prisons, there are several religiously motivated dissidents who are willing to question President Mubarak's rule. Few of the Arab liberals and progressives one meets at conferences appear to have the intestinal fortitude of fundamentalists who are similarly opposed to their regimes.

What we have seen happen in the Islamic Republic of Iran under clerical dictatorship—the conversion of the most anti-American holy-warrior society into the least anti-American, probably most pro-democratic culture in the region—will likely happen elsewhere but even more rapidly if Sunni fundamentalists are given a chance to gain power democratically and demonstrate to their fellow Muslims how their interpretation of the Holy Law and Islamic history will improve their lives.

Correctly understood, anti-Americanism when it accompanies the loosening of political controls in the Middle East is a sign that the status quo that gave us bin Ladenism and 9/11—the perverse marriage of autocracy and Islamic extremism—is coming apart. Under dictatorship, Muslims cannot evolve politically. They will not be able to confront the "baggage" that all Middle Eastern Muslims have with the West, especially the United States, and come to a livable consensus on how they are going to absorb Western ideas, influence, and money. Even in Iran, where the bankruptcy of a virulently anti-American clerical dictatorship has done wonders for the democratic ethic and the prestige of the United States, a functioning democracy is probably the only way the Iranian people will find a sustainable, peaceful modus vivendi with their complicated love-hate for America. It is democracy, not dictatorship, that can best take Muslims through the difficult religious reformation that is well under way among both Shiites and Sunnis. (Correctly understood, bin Laden is an ugly expression of protest against the region's rot.)

This is all about internal Muslim evolution, about coming to terms with the centuries-long absorption of both good and bad Western ideas. It has absolutely nothing to do with whether the Israeli-Palestinian peace process can somehow soon resume. When al Qaeda's princes—bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi—rail against the intrusion of Western democracy into the Muslim world, they know what they are talking about. If it succeeds, democracy will eventually kill them off. It will pull fundamentalist believers—the pool that bin Ladenism must draw from to survive—into the great ethical and spiritual debates that can best happen when free people fight it out in elections. Only Muslims—only fundamentalist Muslims—have the power to kill off bin Ladenism. Historically, there is no reason to believe this will happen under the dictatorships that gave birth to Islamic extremism in the first place.

Like Christendom before it, the Muslim Middle East will have to work out its relation to modernity. The faster democracy arrives, the sooner the debates about God and man can begin in earnest. It will probably be for both Muslims and Westerners a nerve-racking experience. But we have no choice, since continuing autocracy will only make the militants' message stronger and judgment day, as in Iran, a possibly bloody revolutionary event. The electoral victory of Hamas should not give us pause. It should give us hope and encourage us to push for real elections where our national interest stands to gain the most—in Egypt and Iran. We should also not neglect to defend vigorously Christian, Muslim, or Jewish satirists, be they clever, banal, or ugly, wherever they may be found. Both elections and satire are basic to the evolution of the Muslim world. ♦

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Muhammad Caricatured

Journalists and Wahhabis alike are distorting the Islamic tradition

By Stephen Schwartz

The uproar in Europe and some Muslim countries over cartoons of the prophet Muhammad published in a Danish newspaper last September has once again dramatized several dismal aspects of the conflict between radical Islam and the culture of the West. One is that the so-called Arab or Muslim street comprises little more than a rent-a-mob available to burn, loot, and kill whenever Muslim demagogues attack political institutions and media anywhere in the world. Another is the ignorance Western media bring to their reporting on the issues that disturb the global Muslim community.

Thus, reporters and commentators have established the claim that Islam strictly forbids artistic depiction of Muhammad, other prophets, and living beings in general, and that in publishing cartoons of the prophet the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* deeply offended all Muslims. Journalists have foisted this nonsense on the Western public by recycling the apologetics for radical Islam offered by Western academics enjoying the patronage of obscurantist, oil-rich Arabs.

In reality, portrayal of Muhammad is not universally banned in Islam. It is true that Islam was marked from the beginning by a horror of idol-worship, and representations of the prophet are never found in mosques, which instead are often and famously ornamented with intricate nonrepresentational designs known as arabesques and hung with works of calligraphy. But the Koran itself is silent on the matter of images, and the warnings against them contained in the *hadith*, sayings of the prophet recorded centuries after he lived, have been subject to various interpretation.

Depictions of the prophet were once common, for instance, in Persian and Turkic Islamic art, although often in these pictures Muhammad's face or figure is veiled or left blank. Even before the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, Islamic civilization came under the influence of Oriental art, with its rich tradition of human representation. And after the conquest, there was an explosion of painting and other imagery in Islam, including depictions of Muhammad.

So it is that the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington contains a picture of the prophet seated with his companions. The work appears in *Bal'ami's Persian Version of Tabari's Universal History*, from the 14th century. Another image, this one of the birth of the prophet, is found in one of the great achievements of the Islamic book, the *Jami' al-tavarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles), produced at Tabriz in Iran around 1314. The painting, in ink, color, and gold, draws on Christian imagery of Jesus' birth.

A favorite subject of Islamic illustration is the Night Journey of Muhammad, an out-of-body ride on a supernatural horse and ascent into the heavens that is a key element of Islamic theology. The prophet is shown on the magical steed Buraq, flying over Mecca, in a 15th-century manuscript, now in the British Museum, of the *Khamseh* or *Five-Poem Cycle* by Nizami Ganjavi, a poet from Azerbaijan. An even richer illuminated image appears in a Persian miniature from about a hundred years later.

In the late 18th century, the rise of the purist and intolerant Wahhabi sect, allied with the al Saud family in eastern Arabia, ushered in a new wave of iconoclasm wherever Wahhabism appeared. It saw the destruction of many famous manuscripts, books, and artistic works, including pictures of the prophet, on the argument that any depiction of living beings was idolatry. The Wahhabi-Saudi conquest of Mecca and Medina beginning in 1924, and the consolidation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, soon enriched by oil wealth, empowered the Wahhabis to spread their extremist doctrine

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Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Night Journey of Muhammad, from Bukhara, 1514

throughout the world of Sunni Islam.

Today, much Islamic opinion holds that representation of humans and animals is forbidden to Muslims. But no firm and universal rule on these issues has been enunciated. Shia Muslims often keep pictures in their homes of the prophet as well as Ali, the fourth caliph, or successor to Muhammad as leader of the faithful, and Hussein, the prophet's grandson. The deaths of Ali and Hussein mark the beginning of the Shia tradition.

Islam, of course, is not alone in finding the depiction of living beings a matter for debate. Orthodox Judaism and some Christian sects understand the Bible to forbid images. The second of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4) has been variously rendered in English, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (King James Version) and "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below" (New International Version)—to cite just two translations—clearly leaving room for differing views.

The Danish caricatures themselves were mainly innocuous. The only one that could be considered genuinely provocative showed the prophet wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse. Once certain (emphasis on "certain") Muslims claimed the work of the artists was offensive to all believers in the religion, a series of absurd and tragic events ensued. Danish Islamic clerics traveled to Muslim countries to organize a protest, taking with them not only the published cartoons but also gross images, including one of a man wearing a pig's snout that they passed off as a derisive image of Muhammad. Some European newspapers republished the cartoons; but *Jyllands-Posten* apologized for offending any Muslim readers. The paper's editor, Carsten Juste, concluded, "In our opinion, the 12 drawings were sober. They were not intended to be offensive, nor were they at variance with Danish law, but they have indisputably offended many Muslims, for which we apologize." Riots were triggered in various Muslim countries, Danish and other diplomatic offices were attacked, and people have been killed.

But the Western habit of apology and self-abasement proved contagious, as even American politicians offered ridiculous comments on the matter. Bill Clinton, a guest at a business forum in the Gulf state of Qatar, attacked the cartoons as "appalling" and compared them to anti-Jewish propaganda. Bush administration spokesman Kurtis Cooper said, "These cartoons are indeed offensive to the belief of Muslims. We all fully recognize and respect freedom of the press and expression but it must be coupled with press responsibility. Inciting religious or ethnic hatreds in this manner is not acceptable." But objectionable cartoons on religious and ethnic issues are protected expression in the United States, and are not incitement. Incitement means directly urging people to kill each other, not making fun of a religious figure. Anti-Semitic and anti-Christian images proliferate in media around the world, without exceptional comment by the U.S. authorities. Obnoxious anti-Jewish images are particularly common in Arab countries, whose leaders and street agitators have no moral standing to complain about anything said or printed in the West.

Christians and Jews in America have long objected to caricatures they find insulting to Jesus, the Virgin

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Mary, the pope and other Catholic clerics, prominent evangelical preachers, and Israeli leaders. But they have not rioted or threatened anybody with death. Muslims must learn that they do not have a special status in the West, exempt from common standards of law and conduct. If Muslims cannot stand expressions of criticism and even disrespect for Islam in the West, they should return to live in Muslim lands. This is a well-established principle in Islamic law, as enunciated by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the Iraqi Shia cleric, as well as by Sunni jurists. Sistani, let it be noted, has reacted to the cartoon dispute with exemplary calm, condemning the cartoons but also criticizing "misguided and oppressive" Muslims whose activities, he said, create "a distorted and dark image of the faith."

Medieval depiction of Muhammad preaching in a mosque

Furthermore, even if there were Muslim unanimity banning depiction of living beings or even of the prophet, no normal Muslim believes that such rules apply to non-Muslims. Mainstream Muslims do not claim that the rules of their religion must be followed by those outside it. Otherwise, they would try to prevent Christians and Jews living in Muslim-majority societies from drinking wine (as do the Wahhabis). Muslims do believe their revelation is the final message offered by the creator to humanity, and extremists among them use this as a pretext to deprecate Judaism and Christianity. Radical Muslims have a right to such beliefs and expression of them in the West; but if non-Muslims cannot caricature Muhammad, how can Muslims demand protection for their right to deny that Jesus was the son of God? Radical Muslims ignore the obvious truth that banning criticism of any religion will affect them as negatively as it might others.

What is all this really about? Why did it take six months for Muslims to react to the cartoons? The stage-managed outburst of rage originates in two ideological issues, neither of which has any real foundation in Islam as a religion. The first is that the complaining Muslims are summoned to violence by representatives of the Saudi-financed Wahhabi sect, which hates all representation of living beings, just as it hates graveyards, historic mosques, and other objects it claims will induce Muslims to commit *shirk*, or idolworship. The Saudis are currently engaged in extensive vandalism of ancient Islamic architecture on their own territory; recently they demolished five ancient mosques in Medina, including one built by Fatima, the prophet's daughter.

The same destructive attitude was revealed in the destruction of the colossal pre-Islamic Buddha statues at Bamiyan, in Afghanistan, by the Taliban and al Qaeda in the spring of 2001. At that time, a variety of bought-off Western "experts" tried to explain away the vandalism by citing the alleged Islamic ban on images. But the governments of other Muslim countries—including the ultra-radical Shia regime in Iran—have never embarked on the destruction of their pre-Islamic architectural and artistic heritage. Can we imagine the Egyptian government devastating the treasures of Pharaonic art and monumental statuary on the grounds that they are un-Islamic? Will they blow up the Sphinx?

Although more sinister, the aim of intimidating Westerners into silence about any aspect of Islam by this outbreak of fanaticism and brutality is actually secondary. The third and worst piece of the puzzle is an obvious effort to maintain control over elements of the Islamic community, especially those living in the West, so that the benighted outlook of Saudi-financed Wahhabism will go unchallenged among those who represent the greatest threat to Islamic extremism: moderate Muslims.

The Wahhabis have, in great part, attained their goals in this scandalous affair. Western politicians and media have cowered, and Saudi-funded pressure groups like the Council on American-Islamic Relations may now congratulate themselves on administering a lesson in bogus sensitivity to non-Muslim media and governments. But those who defend the censorship on the basis of a false knowledge of Islam should be asked: Is the faith of more than a billion people really so weak that it is threatened by a few cartoons? ♦

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A Strategy for Heroes

What's wrong with the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review

By Frederick W. Kagan

The Pentagon released its Quadrennial Defense Review on February 6. The latest installment of the congressionally mandated report on the state of the military declares, "manifestly, this document is not a 'new beginning.'" Indeed it is not. The new QDR reflects a concerted effort by the Pentagon to return to its pre-9/11 course, focusing on long-term dangers as though the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had never happened, as if America's ground forces were not badly overstretched, as if the nation were not really at war.

Wise commanders design plans that can be executed by ordinary soldiers. They know that if they expect every soldier to be a hero and every commander a genius, they will inevitably be disappointed. Wars are never neat. The unexpected happens. The enemy gets a vote in determining how things go. Sound planning therefore builds in a margin of error: attacking with more force than necessary; maintaining larger reserves; expecting greater friction; and preparing for stronger enemy resistance. This approach has been the American way of war for decades. It is so no longer. Although the Pentagon officially promises to "overmatch" any potential adversary, a military policy of "just barely enough" has been the reality since the beginning of the Bush administration. The 2006 QDR continues in this mold. It propounds a strategy that only heroes could make succeed.

By refusing to propose radical growth in the defense budget even in this time of war, the administration has forced choices about whether to prioritize the present or the future. And as this QDR shows, the Pentagon remains firm in its determination to organize for tomorrow's potential problems rather than today's actual crises.

President Bush placed military transformation at the center of his defense agenda from the time of his first address on national security issues as a candidate, the 1999 Citadel speech. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made transformation the hallmark of his tenure within a few months of taking office. Transforming the military to prepare for the challenges of the future was the theme of the 2001 QDR, as it is of the just-released 2006 QDR. The administration at least has been steadfast.

Such steadfastness is remarkable considering the dramatically changed national security circumstances of the past five years. Military transformation was all the rage in the post-Cold War 1990s, when most analysts believed we would enjoy a "strategic pause," a period in which there were few visible threats. Most transformation discussions in the 1990s assumed that the military should therefore prepare for enemies in the 2020-2025 time frame. Transformation enthusiasts were regularly frustrated that so many resources were being devoted to current operations they felt were less important than the challenge of preparing for massive change decades away.

Bush and Rumsfeld embraced this focus on the distant horizon. Throughout 2001, rumors flew that the Army would lose as much as 40 percent of its active-duty combat forces to pay for transformative airpower and missile programs. These rumors ended with the September 11 attacks, but the transformationists continued to argue that ground forces were outmoded, expensive, risky, and likely to generate far more casualties than the American public would tolerate in a conflict.

Recent history has not been kind to the transformation worldview. September 11, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom have shown that the strategic pause, if it ever existed, is over. Recent conflicts have also shown that ground forces remain central to accomplishing meaningful political goals in war. A nearly pure airpower campaign in Afghanistan did not obviate the need to keep an Army division there for the next four years (and likely into the indefinite future). A land-air campaign in Iraq relying heavily on the air component merely created the preconditions for the long-term maintenance of 140,000 American soldiers there. Astonishingly, the 2006 QDR shows that these facts have not swayed the Pentagon from its commitment to focusing on airpower solutions to long-term threats.

Because a Quadrennial Defense Review occurs every four years, it would seem natural for such a review to focus

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not just on long-term goals and strategies but also on important national security events likely to shape the subsequent four years. The QDR is meant, after all, to be an input into the defense budget process, and that process is generally much more concerned with the next five years than with the next 25. One might have expected this QDR to begin with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to consider scenarios for the development of those conflicts, and to evaluate the ability of the military to handle the likeliest of those scenarios. If, as seems clear, the administration believes that U.S. force levels in Iraq will be dramatically reduced by the end of 2006, then the QDR might well have addressed the problem of recapitalizing the worn-out equipment and transitioning, in general, to a largely peacetime force engaged in normal training. This issue is nowhere addressed in the QDR, though, which is unfortunate, because this complex, confusing, and costly transition will probably be the defining activity of the next four years within the military—always assuming it happens on schedule.

From an evaluation of the end of current large-scale deployments and the move back to a garrison military, the QDR should then have considered other likely threats and challenges in the near- and mid-term. Only then would it make sense to think about the challenges of transformation to meet distant threats and to consider the right balance among the tasks of handling the present, dealing with likely imminent problems, and preparing for dangerous possibilities in the distant future. Such an approach is anathema to the Pentagon, however, because the military establishment is still fundamentally in a "strategic pause" mindset.

The National Defense Strategy, a document released in mid-2005 that serves as the strategic basis for the QDR, declared: "Uncertainty is the defining characteristic of today's strategic environment. We can identify trends but cannot predict specific events with precision." In the preface to the QDR, we similarly find references to an era characterized by the "unexpected," the "unpredictable," "uncertainty," and "surprise." The document lays much emphasis on the need to develop agile thinking, agile management methods, and rapid deployment capabilities to respond to these many uncertainties.

The United States, the document declares, is in the fifth year of a "long war" against "violent extremists who use terrorism as their weapon of choice." This conflict presents "a challenge that is different in kind, but similar in scale, to the Cold War." The QDR repeatedly states that this war will not be won by military means alone, and regularly implies that kinetic operations—the use of military forces on a large scale in combat—will play little or no role in determining the outcome. It proposes a fundamental reorientation of military capabilities away from large-scale conventional war and toward irregular war (which seems to be largely code for insurgency and counterinsurgency) and counterterrorism.

These sorts of operations, it emerges, fit nicely into the pattern of ideas prevalent in Rumsfeld's Pentagon well before the September 11 attacks. Speed of action, agility, special forces, and long-range precision-strike capabilities are all important. The QDR presents counterterrorism operations as primarily missions to identify, target, and kill individual terrorists. Irregular warfare means mainly sending increased numbers of special forces soldiers to hundreds of countries around the world to train their own militaries and police in the tasks of governance and counterinsurgency. The QDR notes that even the increased number of special forces soldiers it proposes will not be adequate for this mission, and so proposes that the regular forces of the Army and the Marines also be prepared to perform the basic functions of training indigenous soldiers that are normally the province of the special forces.

The heavy emphasis on training local police and military forces to win their own wars bears closer examination. The assumption that this is the right way to focus our resources is clearly drawn from administration strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet it seems premature to conclude that we should shift the focus of the ground forces establishment based on the outcome of those experiments to date. There is a deeper problem with this approach, however.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, we began to train indigenous military and police forces after U.S. forces smashed brutal dictatorships and set those countries on a path to democracy. The QDR makes it clear (and the national security strategy documents from which the QDR draws its strategic rationale make it clearer) that the Bush administration believes that winning the "long war" requires loosening the bonds of authoritarian control that now constrict so many states in the Muslim world. The U.S. military can train Pakistani, Egyptian, or Saudi armies and police to do their jobs better—indeed, it has been doing so for a long time. But it is not at all clear that training these agents of repression to be more effective is compatible with convincing the ruling regimes in those states to democratize. The idea of subcontracting the fighting of the "long war" to native militaries and police is really only useful if it is not that important to spread freedom in the Muslim world. If democratization is an important part of national strategy, as the president has repeatedly declared, then simply turning the job of "irregular warfare" over to the locals is not an approach that is likely to succeed.

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But the emphases on the length of this war, its novel nature, its unpredictability, and the surprises it holds in store for us are all really ways of salvaging the "strategic pause" mindset. In fact, the current epoch really is not all that unpredictable, and we do not need to go out to 2020 to find meaningful challenges or meaningful threats.

The world of 2006 is no more or less unpredictable than the world has always been—even during the Cold War. From 1945 to 1990, we knew that we had one overpoweringly dangerous enemy and we oriented all of our military forces to facing that enemy. For all the supposed predictability of that situation, U.S. forces never engaged Soviet troops at all (with the limited exception of CIA officers in Afghanistan in the 1980s). Instead, they fought North Korea and China (after a shocking surprise attack that no one had expected), intervened in the Dominican Republic, fought the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, and then waged a string of smaller-scale operations in the 1970s and 1980s against a series of "unexpected" foes, including pirates in East Asia (the *Mayaguez* incident), Muslim revolutionaries in Iran, terrorists in Libya, local militias in Lebanon, and Marxist revolutionaries in Grenada, culminating in the removal of a strongman drug lord in Panama. The halcyon days when the Soviet threat made everything simple are a myth.

The unpredictability of the 1990s is also a myth. A sober evaluation of the world in 1992 would have suggested that the collapse of Yugoslavia would be a major issue for Europe and the United States; that the U.N. sanctions on Iraq would occupy a great deal of America's time and energy; and that the North Korean nuclear program would be a significant concern. It would also have been clear that Afghanistan's fate after the Soviet withdrawal would be complicated and contentious, although the significance of that fact was harder to predict. After the first World Trade Center bombing of 1993, it should have been possible to imagine that radical Muslim terrorism might be an increasing problem as well. America's leaders were not, on the whole, surprised by these developments—but the national security community continued to write incessantly about the unpredictability of current and future problems.

The same situation holds today. It is virtually certain that Iran and the problem of the Iranian nuclear program will be a central strategic issue for years to come. There are many possible scenarios ranging from peaceful resolution to major war, but any prudent defense policy should be able to respond at the highest level of force to a collapse of the quasi-peaceful relationship between Tehran and the West.

It is also certain that both Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to be dominating national security issues at least for the remainder of the Bush years. Even if the extremely optimistic estimates of troop reductions in Iraq prove justified, the problem of helping the fledgling Iraqi democracy fend off both internal and external challenges will loom large. The situation in Afghanistan is in some respects at least as worthy of concern. Rising Taliban attacks, coupled with Pakistan's continued unwillingness or inability to clear out the tribal areas along Afghanistan's southeastern border, place the Kabul regime in danger and have already been providing a relatively safe haven for al Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist groups. Instability in that region will not dissipate quickly, and it will continue to be a matter of vital import for U.S. national security.

The recent electoral victory of Hamas in Palestine raises the strong possibility that conflict in that war-torn region will once again take center stage in the Middle East. A prudent national security review should consider carefully what actions might be required of the U.S. military should the so-called peace process there collapse.

North Korea is also likely to remain in the front ranks of American national security concerns for the foreseeable future. A country starved for hard currency is unlikely to resist the temptation to sell nuclear weapons or materials and knowledge for making them to high bidders, who may include international terrorists. The prospect of the collapse of the North Korean regime conjures another series of scenarios. Sound defense policy is not based on the assumption that all will be rosy.

It is also nearly certain that the growth of Chinese military power will be a matter of concern for the foreseeable future. The Chinese probably will not attack Taiwan, but the expansion of the Chinese economy and Beijing's drive to expand its influence in the world may have the effect of creating new danger areas where conflict might emerge. Once again, wise national security planners must operate on the assumption that all will not necessarily be well in East Asia.

One could identify many other plausible trouble spots: Venezuela, Colombia, and many other places in Latin America; Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and other African states. The point is not to predict whether crises will actually emerge from any of these hotspots but to recognize the near-certainty that specific parts of the world will pose certain kinds of questions and challenges to the United States over the next five or ten years. Any review of U.S. national security policy should evaluate possible responses to these obvious potential problems before it goes on to speculate about the need to prepare to meet challenges X, Y, and Z that might crop up a generation from now.

The QDR does not proceed in this manner. The

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emphasis on a vague and ill-defined "long war," on the need for agility that can come only through certain kinds of transformation to meet an uncertain and unpredictable world, destroys the possibility of serious strategic thought. It gives free rein to those who wish to indulge particular ideas of what warfare could or should be, but it does not tie the development of American strategy to the real world. The result: a strategy that only heroes could execute.

From 1991 to 2001, American military forces were in theory sized to be able to fight and win two simultaneous major regional conflicts. It is far from clear that the armed forces ever really were large enough to accomplish that mission, but such at least was the stated strategy. In the first Bush QDR in 2001, the force-sizing construct was changed to a program with the unlovely moniker "1-4-2-some." The military was to be able to defend the U.S. homeland; maintain presence in four critical regions; win decisively in two "overlapping" military campaigns; and engage in "a limited number" of "smaller-scale contingencies."

The 2006 QDR changes this formula yet again. The armed forces, it declares, must perform three key missions: "Defend the Homeland"; "Prevail in the War on Terror and Conduct Irregular Operations"; and "Conduct and Win Conventional Campaigns." It breaks each mission down into "steady-state" requirements that the armed forces must perform all the time and "surge" capabilities needed only in a crisis. Thus, the armed forces should be able to "conduct a large-scale, potentially long-duration irregular warfare campaign including counterinsurgency and security, stability, transition and reconstruction operations" (such as the war in Iraq) and "wage two nearly simultaneous conventional campaigns (or one conventional campaign if already engaged in a large-scale, long-duration irregular campaign)." In the case of the conventional war, the armed forces must "[b]e prepared in one of the two campaigns to remove a hostile regime, destroy its military capacity and set conditions for the transition to, or for the restoration of, civil society."

In other words, the military must be able to wage a counterinsurgency campaign in, say, Iraq, and also take down the theocracy in Tehran, replace it with a new stable government, and defeat any insurgency there. Or it must be able to defeat, say, Iran and establish a new government there while also defeating, perhaps, North Korea—but leaving it to the South Koreans, the Chinese, the Japanese, and others to reestablish stability on the peninsula. All the while, the military must continue to defend the homeland and also pursue a handful of lesser engagements, including the continual involvement with local police and military forces around the world that is the hallmark of the QDR's proposed strategy.

It is open to question whether this capability would actually be adequate. The commitment of something like half of the brigade combat teams in the active Army to Iraq has not left the other half free to contemplate a major war. On the contrary—the entire active force, including units normally left undeployed to train other units, has been involved in the Iraq war. Almost all active Army units (and many Guard and Reserve units) are either in Iraq, training to replace units in Iraq, or recovering from a deployment to Iraq. A recent RAND report underlines the magnitude of the problem: "To meet [deployment] requirement levels in the upper range that we have considered—14 to 20 brigades—the Army would experience serious problems in A[ctive] C[omponent] unit readiness and the nation would have few if any ready AC brigades to turn to in a crisis." In January, the Pentagon announced that it would reduce the number of brigade combat teams in Iraq—from the high of 20, kept there to support the Iraqi elections, below the previous normal level of 17—to a new normal level of 15, with several in reserve—still well within the "upper range" of the RAND study.

It seems clear that America's foes are aware of this situation. The North Koreans and the Iranians have both clearly taken advantage of America's preoccupation with Afghanistan and Iraq to advance their nuclear programs and defy the international community. Neither has suffered significant repercussions for that defiance—and their nuclear programs have advanced. Whatever message the Pentagon wishes to send, our enemies are seeing weakness, not strength.

But the authors of the QDR were troubled neither by such signs of overcommitment nor by studies like RAND's. On the contrary, the QDR concluded that "the size of today's forces—both the Active and Reserve Components across the Military Departments—is appropriate to meet current and projected operational demands." The review recommends increasing only the special forces component of the ground forces—and recommends reducing the programmed number of active Army brigade combat teams by one to pay for the growth. The president's budget proposes eliminating the temporary addition of 30,000 soldiers to the Active Army within a few years, to bring the force down to the level of 482,000 troops. By comparison, the Active Army of the 1980s had 780,000 soldiers.

The Pentagon has long argued that we should not evaluate the strength of the military by the number of soldiers. The QDR asserts that technological advance will make the force more capable with fewer troops. This logic does not hold up in the face of the U.S. experience in Iraq.

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Technology has proven and will continue to prove enormously helpful in that and similar conflicts. But counterinsurgency is an inherently manpower-intensive undertaking. The aim of the counterinsurgent is not just to kill his enemies, but also to reassure his allies, provide visible security to the population, improve conditions, and help the indigenous government establish its legitimacy. These are not tasks performed by Tomahawk missiles, JDAMs, or any other sort of precision-guided munition. They have to be performed by soldiers, and the number of soldiers really matters.

Commanders in Iraq have repeatedly indicated (usually off the record) that they have been forced to constrain their operations for lack of soldiers. Many have now argued convincingly that the hyper-efficient ground war of March-April 2003, which used the smallest possible number of soldiers, set the stage not for stability but for insurgency. L. Paul Bremer, the U.S. proconsul in Baghdad after the war, recently declared that he had repeatedly asked for more U.S. troops—to no avail. The relative paucity of U.S. soldiers in Iraq has restricted the strategy of "clear, hold, build" to a handful of towns and villages and left significant areas in Baghdad and elsewhere up for grabs. The number of soldiers, it turns out, still matters a great deal to the outcome of a war.

Above all, a strategy that requires the military to fight one Iraq-type counterinsurgency while also waging a major conventional war, will require that all American soldiers be heroes and all the commanders geniuses. It will require the men and women of the U.S. military to be deployed for years at a time, or else to move from one fight to another with little or no rest in between. It will leave no margin of error.

The QDR's treatment of the National Guard and Reserves show the problem in particularly acute form. For decades, these forces have been the nation's strategic reserve. They were to be mobilized in the event of major war, providing a bridge between the active forces and national conscription. The "lesser conflicts" of the 1990s eroded this distinction. Critical logistics and military police units in the Guard and Reserve had to be mobilized to support operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. This trend continued until 2003, when it began to accelerate exponentially. Now Guard units perform critical combat missions in long-term deployments, and Guard and Reserve support units are regularly mobilized and deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The strategic reserve has become a force without which the Active Army cannot function; a pool of soldiers who have a normal deployment pattern. The Pentagon now states that reserves can expect to mobilize and deploy once every six years, while the active forces can expect to deploy once every three.

If the Guard and Reserve have become so intimately involved in day-to-day operations, where now is the strategic reserve, ready should catastrophe befall us either in one of the two wars underway or in another theater? There is none. This strategy requires getting it right and winning quickly every time, without fail. That is not a strategy for ordinary men.

The QDR should have proposed a permanent increase in the Active Army of at least 100,000 soldiers; in the Marines of at least one combat division; and it should at least have held the size of the National Guard and the Reserves steady. Funding for this growth in forces would need to come primarily from an increase in the defense budget.

The armed forces of the 1990s were inadequate for their mission, starved of resources for modernization and transformation, and unprepared for the challenges of the future. Then the United States went to war. As urgent crises demand our attention, the task of preparing for future threats does not vanish. The QDR is right to insist that we are engaged in what will probably be a long war. Waiting until that war is over before modernizing the force will probably create danger in the future. But the greater danger is in the near term. And the Pentagon has made the wrong choice in neglecting it.

The hard truth is that the defense budget needs to be set high enough to fund both current requirements and a prudent modernization program. The Defense Department should not have to lade its policy-planning documents with discussions on the need to balance risks during wartime. It should not have to rely on its people to be heroic, or to defer an even greater modernization bill for a future generation. The United States is still spending a historically low proportion of its GDP on defense. The growth in defense spending during the Bush administration, although large in peacetime, is very small compared with defense budget changes in previous protracted conflicts. We can afford to spend more on defense, and we must do so or force impossible choices on an overstretched defense establishment.

America's soldiers and Marines have been heroic in the struggle so far. Excellent performance and high retention rates in the face of repeated deployments, extensions of those deployments, and harrowing conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan are ample testimony to that heroism. This generation of young Americans may turn out to be one of the greatest generations by this toughest of all standards. But we should not count on such heroism, and we should not demand it until we really need it. We should establish a defense program that can succeed with mere mortals. ♦

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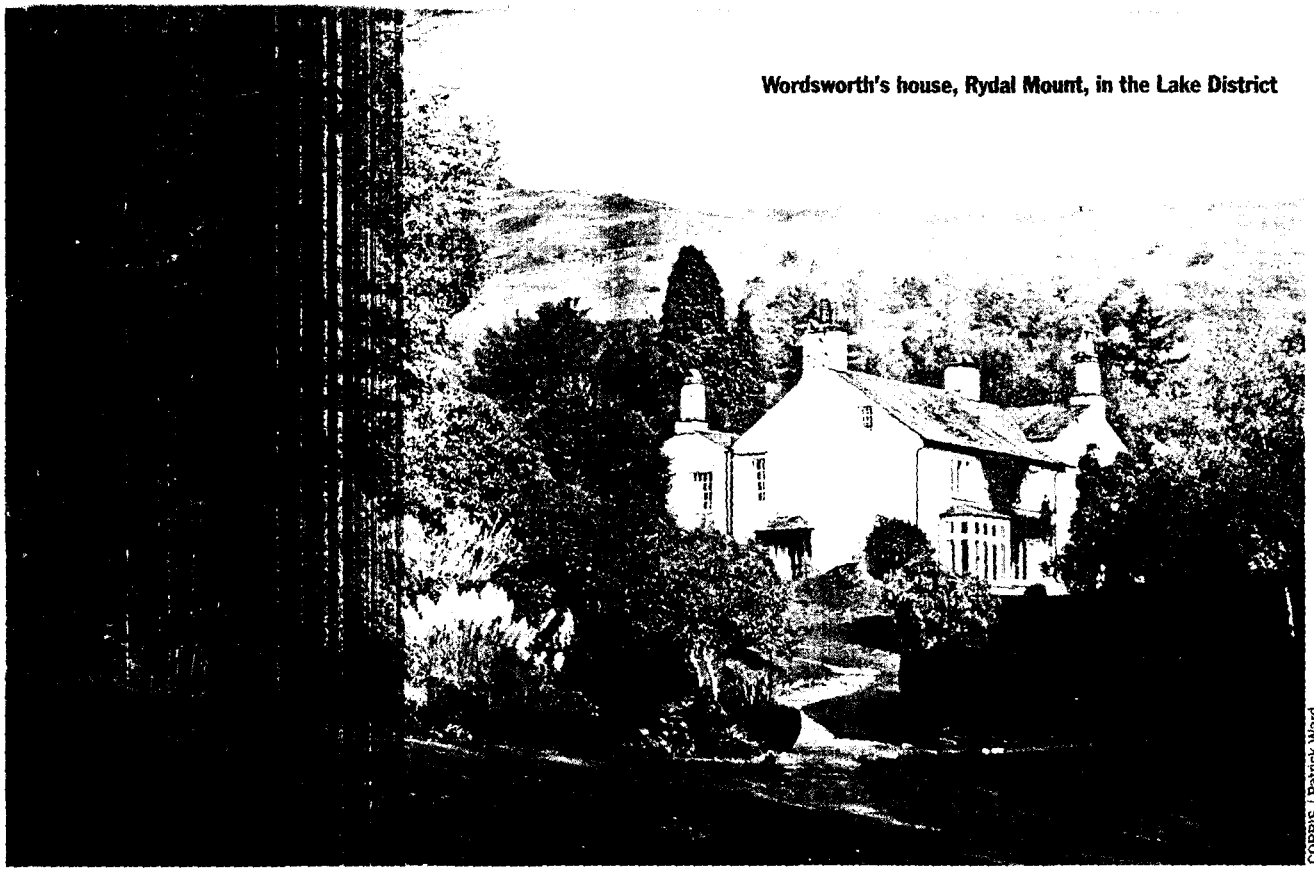

Wordsworth's house, Rydal Mount, in the Lake District

CORBIS / Patrick Ward

The Poet of Meaning

How Wordsworth changed the language BY JEFFREY HART

Literary biography, especially the biography of a great poet, is one of the most demanding of forms, demanding at the same time the very different capabilities of the historian and of the literary critic. Juliet Barker possesses to an admirable degree the abilities of the historian, and brings before us Wordsworth in detail over his long life and important career, perhaps supplanting the very good 1989 biography by Stephen Gill.

She weaves into her narrative passages from Wordsworth's poetry, often "The Prelude," and most often from the earlier 1805 version. She makes good use of that great poem about the development of the poet's mind. Clearly she was drawn to Wordsworth because he was a poet, yet she does not get close enough to the poetry itself, to precisely why it matters—that is, to the justification for her large and, as biography, valuable enterprise.

She takes account, as she must, of the central event of his life, indeed of the life of Europe in his time: the fall of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, and the revolution that followed. She recounts Wordsworth's two trips to Europe in 1791 and 1792, his love affair with Annette Vallon, resulting in a daughter, Caroline. Do not get the impression that Wordsworth was some version of Byron or D'Annunzio, or even Shelley. He dutifully contributed to the support of the child. His outward life was not marked by any sort of remarkable behavior.

Wordsworth
A Life
by Juliet Barker
Ecco, 576 pp., $29.95

Immensely important for his mind, however, was his early humanitarian enthusiasm for the Revolution and the events he observed in France. "Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive," he remembers in "The Prelude," "But to be young was very heaven." If that bliss and that dawn sound familiar as regards more recent revolutions, well they might. The French Revolution was the first modern revolution, driven intellectually by the Rights of Man, that is, by theory. In that it was new. But the dawn turned dark. Wordsworth was appalled by the increasing violence and fanaticism, the fear, the rivers of blood, and then the inevitable young military officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, taking charge to restore order. Wordsworth rejected the humanitarian abstractions that led to the guillotine and to the war that engulfed Europe. As Juliet Barker shows, this reaction led to an internal revolution in Wordsworth's mind, a

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major revolution, its reverberations still with us.

Hazlitt, an acquaintance of Wordsworth and Coleridge, was precisely wrong, misled by his own radical politics, in thinking Wordsworth's best poetry came from his revolutionary humanitarian sympathies. No. It came from his reaction against republican abstractions, a rejection that focused his mind on the individual and on the concrete particulars of experience. It was this shift in Wordsworth's mind that led ultimately to his famous praise of Burke in the 1850 "Prelude." Burke, wrote Wordsworth, "forewarns, denounces, launches forth, / Against all systems built on abstract rights," and who "the majesty proclaims / Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time." Both Burke, "alarmed into reflection," as he said, and Wordsworth saw that political abstractions (we would say ideologies) are lethal abbreviations of thought. Burke, reflecting deeply on an actual English society, arrived at an analytical understanding that institutions constitute the unconscious mind, that is, the habits, of society.

In his *Thoughts on French Affairs* (1791), however, in a remarkable passage singled out by Matthew Arnold in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," Burke, without at all taking back his critique of abstract rights, turned his analysis of social structure into a perception of inevitable social process. Powerful and converging forces doomed the *ancien régime*: Burke's analysis of society was analogous to Wordsworth's analysis of mind. As Burke wrote:

> If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it . . . they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself than the designs of men.

Arnold rightly called this a great moment in the history of thought, pushing a correct analysis of society into an awareness of necessary change. As Arnold saw, this moment remains instructive; indeed, it is Wordsworthian in its empiricism and in its analytical hostility to abstractions. Wordsworth turned from the abstractions of the *philosophes* to the particular individuals and inward to the experiences of the individual mind.

Juliet Barker follows Wordsworth through his early life to his beginnings as an experimental poet, making the Lake District his imaginative property as William Faulkner would Yoknapatawpha County. His poems, indeed, often were populated by rural figures in many ways like those of Faulkner: eccentrics, peasants, storytellers, even an idiot boy.

For his new poetry Wordsworth undertook a revolution in language, as set forth in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" (1800):

> My purpose was to imitate, and so far as possible, to adapt, the very language of men . . . to bring language nearer to the language of men. . . . Naturally arranged according to the laws of metre [it] does not differ from that of prose.

The language of poetry is periodically rejuvenated by such a return to the norm of the English language. Samuel Johnson had appealed to it in his criticism of John Milton's deviation, and Ezra Pound later used it against the Victorians. In his experimental "Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth used that norm of language for his new subject matter, the vagrant associations of the unconscious mind.

For example, in "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known," the man's emotions have no rational basis. He loves young Lucy, but, as he rides along, the moon drops beneath her cottage roof:

> *What fond and wayward thoughts will slide*
> *Into a lover's head—*
> *"O Mercy!" To myself I cried,*
> *"If Lucy should be dead."*

There the relationship among the ideas is other than rational, and though conventional reviewers such as the brutal Francis Jeffrey of *The Edinburgh Review* mocked such poems as doggerel, the Age of Reason was over. Wordsworth had made a revolution of his own. His imagination seized upon particulars, possessed them as his own, not only people but rivers, mountains, animals, even an overlooked flower:

> *To me the meanest flower that blows can give*
> *Thoughts that do too often lie too deep for tears.*

That "meanest flower" possesses metaphysical importance, and we will return to it in a moment.

Proceeding from the simpler Lucy poems, Wordsworth built on his insights about the mind. In 1798 he visited Tintern Abbey, and notice the precision of his title: "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798." Every element there is important. The river is important, also the fact that he is revisiting the site he has known, mixing past and present:

> *Five years have passed, five summers, with the length*
> *Of five long winters! And again I hear these waters rolling from their mountain-springs . . .*

Watch out when Wordsworth hears that sound of waters. He seems then to gain access to his unconscious mind, exploring it as the poem proceeds, and at length experiencing an epiphany in the form of profound sympathy:

> *For I have learned*
> *To look on nature, not as in the hour*
> *Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes*
> *The still sad music of humanity.*

That last line goes beyond the ordinary world to a moment of aural epiphany. It pushes language, resists analysis. "Still"? Does that mean "silent"? Or "always" sad? Or both simultaneously? Language seems to dissolve. I know of nothing in poetry resembling that line, that moment. Keats's unheard melodies are "sweeter." The "still" sad music of humanity must possess vast depths of sadness.

We notice something about his verse here. Wordsworth has come through the experiments of his Lucy poems, the nursery-rhyme simplicity; has retained the language of speech; and has also

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done something new with iambic pentameter, repossessing it from Shakespeare and the very different verse of Milton, making it over into his own conversational form. He also has become capable of such a line as "the still sad music of humanity."

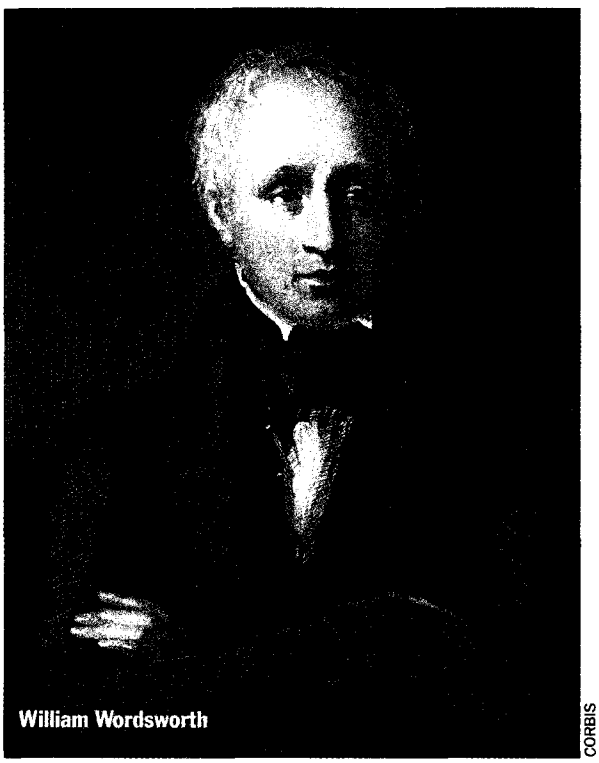
Wordsworth knows, moreover, that his characteristic resonant lines have to do with his relationship to his unconscious mind, as in his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." He chose every word of that title carefully, "intimations," "recollections," "early" —and remember those sounding Wordsworthian waters. The epiphany in the poem comes here:

Hence in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

The sound of waters signals Wordsworth's moment of access to his own childhood mind—really, as he believes, to his pre-infant mind. In such verse as this, the exceptional moment comes with an increase in sonority, with Milton perhaps nearby. It is about the early mind before, or a bit later than, birth that he writes. Not incidentally, we are present at the invention of the idea of childhood, as in the epigraph to this poem:

The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

"Natural piety" has to do with early affections that become part of the self through the unconscious. A connection exists between Wordsworth's discovery of the unconscious, or the preconscious, mind and his valuing the humblest things, animals, flowers, lowly yet enduring human beings. For example, to consider one more very great poem, "Resolution and Independence" (1802): The poet, a sensitive man, experiences a fear he cannot name, an unconscious dread, that somehow has to do with poetic genius. We know that something major is in the offing: "There was a roaring in the wind all night; / The rain came heavily and fell in floods . . ."


William Wordsworth

CORBIS

More water, more unconscious mind. But now it is the Shakespearean storm of disorder, not the reconnection with the sources of reassurance but the flooding of his mind with dread:

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
Oh Him who walked with glory and in joy
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side:
We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end
despondency and madness.

Thomas Chatterton legendarily died at 17, a suicide; Robert Burns also died young. The sixth line violates form and enacts the surge of irrational fear. Does such a fate await this poet? Renewed assurance comes from the unlikeliest source, an old man gathering medicinal leeches in a marsh, a man bent double, almost inanimate. This old man gives the highly civilized poet relief from his anxieties:

Motionless as a Cloud the old man stood;
That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
And moveth altogether, if it moveth at all.

That "motionless" cloud. Years ago, it must have been spring 1952 in his course on the Romantics at Columbia, Lionel Trilling began meditating on that cloud, wondering about it, and seeming unable to define his interest. I sat there increasingly irritated. Why did Wordsworth compare the old leech-gatherer to the cloud? Trilling marveled on—to no point that I could see. I now think the cloud represented to Wordsworth (and that Trilling sensed something like this) the actuality of Being that in Wordsworth pervades all things—humans, animals, plants. That is the point of its strange, its metaphoric, immobility. Wordsworth, indeed, used the word "being" in this doctrinal passage:

'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked.

That is Wordsworth's doctrine. The poetry embodies the experience and the proof. If John Stuart Mill and other Victorians found Wordsworth to be a religious poet, they were correct to do so, and he was a "nature poet" only in a special sense. Very few descriptions of nature exist in his poetry, but there are, rather, reactions to nature, often scenes he remembers—from childhood?— that set up associations in his mind. He manifestly experi-

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ences nature as a gift, not man-made as is a city.

I have never met an engineer or an architect who had much interest in actuality as a gift, as Being, which, as a gift, stands over against nothingness, and raises immediately the question of why there is something rather than nothing. Thus, Paul Tillich defined God as "the ground of Being." The term "pantheist" has been applied to Wordsworth, as if he were a follower of Spinoza. No, I think he was proto-Christian.

Wordsworth knew nothing about the philosophy of Being, ontology. The *Monologion* and *Proslogion* of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) were certainly not included in the curriculum of Wordsworth's Cambridge. For the perception of Being in our own time, turn to Marilynne Robinson's novel *Gilead* (2004) and a prose adequate to the perceptions. In a disarming moment recounted by Juliet Barker, one of Wordsworth's dons, mentioning his own lectures, advised Wordsworth not to bother attending them, they weren't worth much. Wordsworth apparently took his advice and had a mediocre record at Cambridge. Evidently not much had changed since Edward Gibbon's vacuous Oxford. Gibbon and Wordsworth did well anyway.

Juliet Barker skillfully conducts us through his long careers from experimental poet to sage of Rydal Mount, which became a pilgrimage shrine, and at length to national icon named poet laureate by Queen Victoria.

Of course, he could not complete his epic-length poem "The Prelude," about the history of his mind. He keeps making discoveries, has Proustian "spots of time." He began writing it in 1798, published an edition in 1805, another in 1850. He first recognizes his affinity with Burke in the later "Prelude." He probably was still making discoveries about his mind when he died at 80 in April 1850. Penguin has published a good parallel text of "The Prelude," his unfinishable poem about the activity of his mind, which, after all, was the most important thing about him, and to us all. ♦

Pax Americana

Is there any alternative to U.S. primacy?

BY GARY SCHMITT

Distracted by the red-hot partisan debate over Iraq, one can easily lose sight of the underlying strategic imperative that now guides American foreign policy. Robert Lieber's *The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* serves as an invaluable primer on the nature of that imperative, outlining in a comprehensive but accessible fashion the continuing need for American global leadership.

The American Era
Power and Strategy for the 21st Century
by Robert Lieber
Cambridge University, 272 pp., $28

The core argument itself is not new: The United States and the West face a new threat—weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists—and, whether we like it or not, no power other than the United States has the capacity, or can provide the decisive leadership, required to handle this and other critical global security issues. Certainly not the United Nations or, anytime soon, the European Union. In the absence of American primacy, the international order would quickly return to disorder. Indeed, whatever legitimate concerns people may have about the fact of America's primacy, the downsides of not asserting that primacy are, according to *The American Era*, potentially far more serious. The critics "tend to dwell disproportionately on problems in the exercise of [American] power rather than on the dire consequences of retreat from an activist foreign policy," Lieber writes. They forget "what can happen in the absence of such power."

As clear as Lieber's core point is, his analysis is not a simple-minded account of the need for American primacy. He describes not only the elements that make up that primacy—military, economic, technological, and cultural—but also its limits. For instance, Washington can't force its allies always to agree with it. America's superiority on the battlefield provides no ready solution to the use of asymmetrical warfare by our adversaries. And American primacy cannot help but fuel the ideological and cultural animosities that inflame so many of our enemies. American primacy may be necessary, but it's not a free ride by any means. Even among our friends, a key dilemma of American power is that, when it is not used—as in Sudan or Rwanda—it draws almost as much criticism as when it is.

"There is," Lieber remarks, "a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't quality in the international reactions to U.S. interventions or the lack of them." One is reminded here of the schizophrenia in Europe during the Clinton administration. At the very time the French were accusing the United States of being a "hyperpower," they were also worrying that the impeachment of Bill Clinton would result in a distracted Washington, incapable of playing its necessary role on the world stage.

But neither is American primacy a sure thing, according to Lieber. Although the American military has no peer, even it, when forced to han-

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dle serial major conflicts (as is the case today), would be hard-pressed to handle anything new. Moreover, over the longer run, the federal budget is filling up with the obligations of the now-retiring Baby Boomers, increasingly squeezing funds for national security into a smaller and smaller share of the public pie. And finally, there is no guarantee that Americans, whatever the intrinsic merits of U.S. global leadership, will necessarily continue to support that role in the face of its incompetent exercise.

Yet, whatever the limits and problems associated with American primacy, Lieber argues that there is no real alternative if we want a stable and prosperous world. And the heart of his book is an examination of how this fact of international life remains so for Europe, for the Middle East, and for Asia.

In the case of Europe, after examining both the sources of tension and cooperation in current transatlantic relations, Lieber argues that Europe has no choice but to depend on American leadership and power. Europe's lack of unanimity over foreign policies, and its own lack of hard power, leave it with little choice but to rely on the United States when it comes to maintaining the world's security blanket. As for the Middle East, after making the case for going to war with Saddam's Iraq—a case that ultimately hinges on the risks of not acting—Lieber notes that it still remains the case that "only the U.S." can deter regional thugs, contain weapons proliferation to any degree, keep the Arab-Israeli peace process afloat, and keep the oil supplies flowing to us and our allies. And in Asia, it is the United States that "plays a unique stabilizing role . . . that no other country or organization can play." Absent America's presence, the region's key actors would face a dramatically different set of security concerns, in which more overt, "great power" competition would likely become the norm.

Lieber is not oblivious to the fact that the rest of the world is hardly happy with this state of affairs, even while at times reluctantly admitting its necessity. As he quotes one European parliamentarian, "There are a lot of people who don't like the American policeman, but they are happy there is one." Nor, Lieber admits, is this situation made any easier by the sometimes ham-handed way in which Washington works with its friends and allies.

Yet, whatever the discontent generated by American primacy, the most remarkable feature of the present international order is how little real reaction there has been to that dominance. Lieber's key evidence here is that there has been no sustained effort by the world's other great powers to check the exercise of American power by forming new coalitions. And even in the Middle East, the region where America is seemingly hated most, the region-wide anti-American uprising that was predicted to follow the invasion of Afghanistan, and then Iraq, has not taken place.

For all the bitching and moaning about America's hegemonic status, it has not actually produced a serious effort by the other powers to overturn it. Hedge a bit, perhaps; overturn it, no.

But for all the strength and clarity in Lieber's account of American primacy, two issues of note require fuller analysis.

The first has to do with China and its rise as a significant power. Lieber may be right to suggest that, at the moment, China is not interested in a precipitous withdrawal of the United States from the Asian region. On the other hand, as Lieber's own account implicitly suggests, closer relations among the United States and countries like Japan, India, and Vietnam indicate that something more is going on in the region than his own overview fully takes account of. If there is any counterbalancing going on, it's actually aimed not at the United States but at a rising China. And whether Washington's public rhetoric about U.S.-China relations admits it or not, China's rise includes the growth of Chinese nationalism and ambitions that can't help but see America's role as guarantor of the region's status quo as an obstacle.

In short, there is a great power game afoot in East Asia that is somewhat obscured by talks about trade relations and cooperation on North Korea but, nevertheless, will increasingly be a challenge to the idea of American primacy in at least this corner of the world.

The second issue has to do with the American public's own reaction to U.S. global primacy. Lieber, as noted earlier, is fully aware of the fact that "a suitable grand strategy can . . . be undermined if it is poorly implemented." But it is also true that, when American statecraft is exercised successfully, and the result is a seemingly safer and more pacific world, public support for continuing that leadership role can disappear as well. Certainly, this was a problem we faced in the 1990s, when budgets for the foreign and defense establishments were cut by Democrats and Republicans alike.

No doubt, sound leadership can help mitigate or even overcome this whipsawing tendency in public opinion. Yet, just as Lieber points out, while more might be done "to win 'hearts and minds'" abroad, the fact remains that "the beginning of wisdom" with respect to America's role in the world is to realize that "contradictory reactions and accompanying anti-Americanism are inevitable."

So, too, the beginning of wisdom at home is to recognize that, in the face of a clear threat, Americans are quite willing to adopt a strategic game plan that requires the use of American power to sustain a world that reflects our liberal, universal principles. This same liberalism—whose ultimate goal is a well-led private life—can make sustaining that role difficult. But sustain that role we must, since, as Lieber concludes, we continue to live "in a world where the demand for 'global governance' greatly exceeds the supply." ♦

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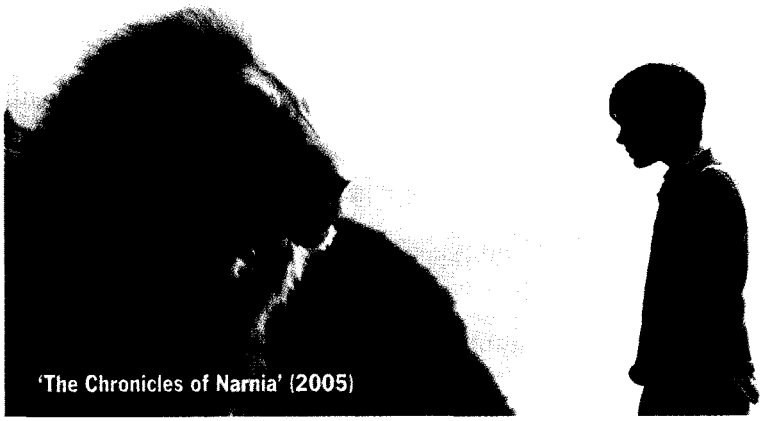
Imaginary Man

C.S. Lewis and the power of myth.

BY DANIEL SULLIVAN



'The Chronicles of Narnia' (2005)

KRT

C.S. Lewis was a Christian apologist and the author of a famous series of fairy tales. But many readers separate the two parts of his work. Admirers and detractors alike even think of the obvious Christian inspiration of *The Chronicles of Narnia* as something distinct from the story itself—as if Lewis wrote a fairy tale and injected it (for better or worse) with Christian themes. But C.S. Lewis himself always insisted that he simply described the world Narnia as his imagination conjured it. In *The Narnian* Alan Jacobs charts the development of that imagination, showing how Lewis's love of fairy tales and his deep Christian faith were part of the same devotion. In the process, Jacobs presents a valuable insight at the heart of Lewis' thought. And his clear presentation of this insight makes *The Narnian* worthwhile reading, despite its several slow chapters and occasionally plodding prose.

The Narnian
The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis
by Alan Jacobs
Harper San Francisco, 368 pp., $25.95

As an intellectual biography, it starts with the question: "What sort of man wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia*?" Jacobs's basic answer guides the whole book: As a friend described him, C.S. Lewis was "a man in love with the imagination." As Jacobs tells it, the rich products of man's imagination provided Lewis an entry into some of the most sublime joys of life. From his bookish youth, the charms of myth—from Homer to Norse mythology to Renaissance epic—gave Lewis an almost complete satisfaction. They filled him with a sense of longing and possibility, a delightful feeling that anything can happen in what is a beautiful world. He called it "joy." Jacobs calls it "delight." This delight would animate all of Lewis's writing as a Christian, including, near the end of his life, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

As he describes a life that began in Protestant Belfast, and ended in the lecture rooms of Oxford and Cambridge, Jacobs consistently relates the events and thoughts of Lewis's life at various times to the fairy tale series he would write so many years later. Discussing Lewis's childhood, for instance, Jacobs relates how Lewis and his brother Warren spent much of their childhood conjuring entire worlds and imagining adventures to happen inside them. It is no surprise, also, that Lewis, who detested every minute he spent at boarding school, envisioned eternal life in Narnia as a "permanent holiday from school."

By keeping the Narnia books always before the reader, Jacobs reminds us of Lewis's lifelong devotion to the delight he found in such stories. This approach is most effective when Jacobs discusses the central event in Lewis's intellectual life: his conversion to Anglican Christianity. As a young man, C.S. Lewis was a hard-bitten atheist. His brand of unbelief seems to have been a typical late Victorian anthropological materialism—that religion is made by man, and men are made of matter. He held that philosophical position in spite of his attachment to the enchantment of myths. Refusing to believe in the myths he loved, Lewis trusted only in matter— the physical reality that his senses verified. Any other meaning that men might attribute to things was illusory.

As he himself put it, "nearly all that I loved I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believed to be real I thought grim and meaningless."

According to Jacobs, Lewis got past his philosophical pessimism primarily by learning that myth, with all its delightful enchantment and possibility, contains truth about the world that neither science nor philosophy can access. To be sure, he first decided that the philosophical basis for his unbelief was far weaker than he had thought, but what attracted him to Christianity positively was his deeper understanding of the truth found in the stories he loved. Ultimately, he came to believe that the Christian myth was, in fact, the truest and most beautiful story that there is. And just as the delight of all myths gives readers a wider sense of what human life can be, so the power of the Christian story, as something that actually happened, really does open up eternal possibility to men.

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In a letter he wrote shortly after his conversion, Lewis said, "the doctrines we get *out of* the true myth are of course *less* true: they are translations into our *concepts* and *ideas* of that wh. [sic] God has already expressed in a language more adequate, namely the actual incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection."

"That is," Jacobs adds, "the language of actual historical event, such as can be narrated in mythical form, is a *more* truthful language than the language of 'concepts and ideas.'" By focusing on Lewis's devotion to story, Jacobs highlights this thought, which might otherwise seem strange coming from a polemicist.

Here, then, is the valuable insight of Lewis's that *The Narnian* illuminates for us: that the highest truth is something imagined, not proved, and that it comes not in arguments but in stories. For Lewis, Christianity is the true story that communicates the truth of God to men, and to believe in and follow Christ is to join one's own life to that narrative. Unlike the systematic ideologies and philosophies that competed for the attention of intellectuals in Lewis's time, Christianity came from a powerful story. It is a story of God among men that demands of man feats of the imagination—for instance, to imagine God incarnated as a man, crucified by men and thus winning their salvation, and rising again.

So C.S. Lewis presented both Christianity and imagination as things far richer than we are accustomed to thinking of them. For him, Christianity was not merely a set of doctrines to which we assent, or a self-help guide to a more satisfying life, but a powerful story that invites us to live lives richer than a mere existence as atomized individuals. It opens before us the possibility of great love, sacrifice, humility, and strength.

Parallel to this "story-book Christianity," Lewis indicates how imagination and story themselves are more important than modern society usually appreciates. For those who view fairy tales as stories "just for kids" would also put aside, as childish things, mythmaking, storytelling, and all the flights of fancy that bear man to delight. In short, they close themselves off to the imagination for fear of being duped into believing in "kids' stuff." Thus, they shut themselves into the "grim, meaningless" world that the young, materialist C.S. Lewis had mistakenly believed was all there is. But for the mature, Christian Lewis, the world was not a mechanical thing, set in its course and monotonous, but rather always expanding and pregnant with possibility.

Jacobs's accomplishment is to reveal this deep and ennobling aspect of Lewis's thought by showing the intrinsic connection between his religious and his imaginary writing. Speaking of the medieval view of the cosmos in contrast to ours, Lewis called it "a festival not a machine, overwhelming in its greatness but satisfying in its harmony." Something like that captures the view of man's life that Lewis believed anyone could take who dared to imagine it. ♦

Falluja Follies

How Marines, and politics, fought the insurgents.

BY MAX BOOT

Not long ago I found myself researching the 1898 Battle of Omdurman, in which General Kitchener's Anglo-Egyptian expeditionary force devastated a Sudanese army of Islamic militants. I read reports and letters written by British officers, contemporary newspaper and magazine articles, and subsequent historical studies. But the most valuable information came from a source that seldom gets much critical respect—"instant histories" written by journalists and rushed into print within months of the events being described. The most famous of these, of course, is *The River War*, written by a junior cavalry officer and part-time correspondent named Winston Churchill. But equally, if not more, valuable, were volumes by such long-forgotten figures as Bennett Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*, Ernest Bennett of the *Westminster Gazette*, and G.W. Steevens of the *Daily Mail*. Such accounts are often scorned for lack of perspective and polish, yet I found their vivid writing, based on first-hand observation, invaluable in reconstructing what actually happened.

No True Glory
A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah
by Bing West
Bantam, 380 pp., $25

A hundred years from now historians will no doubt be equally grateful for Bing West's two volumes (so far) on the Iraq war. The first of these, *The March Up*, described what he saw as he and a coauthor accompanied the First Marine Division on its sprint to Baghdad in April-May 2003. Now, in *No True Glory*, West describes the Marines' fights in Falluja in 2004, their toughest tests since the initial invasion.

It is hard to think of anyone better qualified to chronicle Marine war-fighting. West was a Marine rifle platoon leader in the Vietnam War and author of *The Village*, the classic account of the Marines' combined action platoons. He went on to become an assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration, and has remained close to the Corps ever since. His son, Owen West, is another Marine veteran and author. The two are now collaborating on a screenplay of *No True Glory*, which has

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been optioned by Hollywood.

I had the good fortune to accompany Bing on one of his many trips to Iraq. He turned out to be a perfect (if occasionally hair-raising) guide. First, he's fearless, often taking off his body armor and helmet even while everybody else remained in their full "battle rattle." Second, he's a great conversationalist, capable of instantly establishing rapport with a buck private or a three-star general. And third, he's got an insatiable thirst for adventure, which leads him to seek out the most dangerous areas to see for himself what's going on.

The fruits of his labors are apparent in a you-are-there feel that cannot be faked. And, while many other correspondents have ventured to the front lines in Iraq, few have stayed as long as West, or brought as much knowledge of military affairs to their work. The result is a book that will no doubt be studied by professionals for its meticulous accounts of small-unit tactics, but can also be enjoyed by the general public as a great—if at times dispiriting—yarn.

The greatness is provided by the Marines, who showed superhuman courage and dedication in their assaults upon Falluja—assaults that deserve to go down along with Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, and Hue City in the annals of the Corps. The dispiriting part of the book relates how their best efforts were often stymied by the dithering of military and political higher-ups.

The trigger for the initial assault was the ambush and murder of four American security contractors in Falluja on March 31, 2004. The two senior Marines in Iraq—Lieutenant General James Conway, commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force (roughly equivalent to an army corps), and Major General James Mattis, commander of the First Marine Division—did not want to alter their strategy of slowly extending their control over this Sunni city, which had been hostile to Americans since the start of the occupation. They proposed gathering intelligence and picking off the ambush's ringleaders, one by one, over the next few weeks. But that wasn't good enough for L. Paul Bremer III, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, and General John Abizaid, head of Central Command. They wanted an immediate assault to punish those responsible for hanging charred American corpses on a bridge.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President Bush accepted their advice, and the Marines were told, against their better judgment, to enter the city of 280,000 in force without adequate preparation. The offensive began on the evening of April 4. Two Marine battalions advanced slowly against tough opposition, battling their way toward the city center. By the evening of April 8, Mattis estimated that his men were 48-72 hours away from finishing the fight. But they were not allowed to finish it.

While the Marines were making military progress, they were losing the battle for public opinion. The only news out of the city came from Al Jazeera and other Arabic-language outlets sympathetic to the insurgents, who passed along exaggerated claims of civilian casualties. At the same time, Moktada al Sadr's Mahdist militia was rising up to challenge coalition forces in Najaf, Karbala, and other cities. A political disaster appeared to be looming, with members of the Iraqi Governing Council threatening to resign if the United States did not end its "atrocities" in Falluja.

Bremer and Abizaid did not want to risk the political fallout from continuing the attack. Bush accepted their recommendation to order a unilateral ceasefire, apparently unaware that Conway and Mattis—the men on the spot—strongly disagreed. They had not wanted to launch this offensive in the first place, but they knew that stopping prematurely would only embolden the insurgents to greater depravities. And they were right.

Prevented from controlling the city themselves, the Marines acceded to the request of former Baathist army officers that they be allowed to organize a force of local men to keep order. The Falluja Brigade was quickly exposed as a farce. The insurgents were now in control of a major city in western Iraq, and they turned it into a center of bomb-making, kidnapping, and general mayhem. Anyone who dared to cooperate with the Iraqi government or U.S. forces was killed.

As the full awfulness of the situation became inescapable, President Bush and Iraqi prime minister Ayad Allawi decided that they had no choice but to regain control. By the time the second assault began on November 7, the insurgents were much stronger than they had been in April. They were estimated to total at least 3,000 men, and they had had months to dig trenches, rig booby traps, and barricade streets. But the Marines were also better prepared. Their six battalions were backed by three Army battalions, a British battalion, and three Iraqi battalions, giving the coalition a total force of some 12,000.

The insurgents fought with suicidal courage, but they were no match for the Americans, who cleared the city house by house, suffering 70 dead and 609 wounded. By the time the guerrillas had been routed, Falluja had been devastated—full, as West writes, of "drooping telephone poles, gutted storefronts, heaps of concrete, twisted skeletons of burnt-out cars, demolished roofs, and sagging walls."

While West does not stint the political ramifications of the assault, his focus remains—and rightly so—on the frontlines. *No True Glory* features amazing accounts of heroism, brutality, perseverance, and gallows humor.

I was particularly struck by two kinds of stories recounted over and over: tales of wounded Marines—many badly wounded and eligible for medical evacuation—struggling to get back into battle, and tales of senior officers joining privates and corporals on the firing line. On April 9, 2003, for instance, "Mad Dog" Mattis was late to a meeting with senior brass because he had stopped his command convoy to help a small patrol reduce a house from which they had taken machine-gun fire. West quotes a gunnery sergeant: "The general flanked the *hajis* from the south."

It is hard to imagine an Iraqi general—or a general in just about any other army in the world—risking his neck in this manner. Such stories demonstrate the Corps's egalitarian ethos, and go a long way toward explaining its sky-high morale and superb fighting quality. ♦

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Pocahontas in Love

Sex, betrayal, and New Age mush in colonial Virginia. BY MARTHA BAYLES

On a misty April morning in 1607, three tall, square-rigged English ships glide up the wide, luminous estuary of what is now called the James River. Instead of discovering the land from the ships, we discover the ships from the land, as a band of Powhatan Indians trot along a ridge, marveling at what must have been the 17th-century equivalent of alien spacecraft.

Yet wisely, the camera does not presume to plumb the Powhatans' reactions. Rather it floats behind their backs, offering a detached perspective on the whole majestic scene. Best of all, writer-director Terrence Malick decided at the last minute to accompany this scene not with the pretty noodlings of James Horner's commissioned score, but with music that is truly sublime: the murmuring, rising, surging prelude to Wagner's *Das Rheingold*.

The New World
Directed by Terrence Malick

"The soul of beauty is distance," wrote Simone Weil, and Malick's best work bears this out. No other living director can touch him when it comes to natural panoramas, filmed here by Emmanuel Lubezki entirely on 65mm stock (the first time this has been done since Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*). In several such glorious sequences *The New World* gives something like a God's-eye view of that first, fraught encounter between the Old World and the New. Film critics who do not thrill to such achievements should take up another line of work.

But film is not just a visual art. It's also a narrative art. And while Malick has hold of a terrific yarn (at least, Captain John Smith thought so when he invented parts of it), this film tangles the spinning of it. By now, everyone knows that Pocahontas was only 11 when she begged her papa, Chief Wahunsonacock (a.k.a. Powhatan) not to purée Captain Smith's head. From this fact, sober historians deduce that the two could not possibly have been lovers. (In a dark corner of my mind, a little voice squeaks, "Why not? This is Virginia." But let us not go there.)

Historians also note that such staged reprieves were a customary form of hospitality among powerful Algonkian chiefs. Which makes sense, really: If your host has the power to crush your skull but refrains from doing so, then you are all the more likely to follow your visit with a thank-you note. At any rate, Malick wastes little time on this legendary scene, choosing through blinding chiaroscuro and tortured camera angles to make it appear less a historical set piece than a reject from the Stoned Otter Indie Film Festival.

Malick is respected for his screenplays. But never before has he attempted anything quite this ambitious. In his first successful feature, *Badlands*, about a killing spree carried out by two aimless teenagers in South Dakota, he had a headline-grabbing story to tell. In *Days of Heaven* he had the idiom of his native Texas to set a wry, laconic tone. In *The Thin Red Line* he had James Jones's World War II novel to adapt. Here, by contrast, there is no clear guide, only multiple, conflicting, obscure sources. And for all his cinematic gifts, Malick seems somewhat lacking in the one thing most needful: historical imagination.

Somewhat, not totally. If you want the historical imagination strangled in its crib, see the 1953 clunker, *Captain John Smith and Pocahontas* (*Peyton Place* in deerskin) or the 1995 Disney cartoon *Pocahontas* (Barbie and Ken in a canoe). *The New World*, by contrast, commits one major anachronism, but also works to correct it. In brief, it goes from overripe romanticism to something more sober and ultimately moving—then (unfortunately) back to romanticism. It should have quit while it was ahead.

The romanticism comes first, in the form of a prolonged sunlit dalliance between Smith (played broodingly by Colin Farrell) and Pocahontas (played brilliantly by 14-year-old Q'orianka Kilcher, the striking daughter of a Swiss mother and Peruvian Indian father). These love scenes are served just the way a certain middlebrow audience prefers, with a dollop of Mozart on top and a sprinkling of bad poetry:

> *Love, . . . shall we not take what is given?*
> *. . . There is only this. All the rest is unreal.*
> *Father, where do you live? In the sky, the clouds, the sea?*
> *Show me your face, give me a sign . . . We rise, we rise.*

I gag, I gag. It is possible that the hard-charging Smith was stopped in his tracks by unexpected tenderness for this almond-eyed Lolita. And it is possible that Pocahontas, by all reports an extraordinary individual, was a Kierkegaardian animist before she became a good Anglican. But, please. When such characters speak, they need to sound as though they are living in their own time, not ours—or worse, the time of D.H. Lawrence and Mabel Dodge Luhan, when pale-faced aesthetes sought transcendence through sexual intercourse, Native Americans, and (where possible) sexual intercourse with Native Americans.

Eventually Smith leaves, and a bereft Pocahontas allows herself to be wooed and won by John Rolfe, the man who taught the world to smoke. Why

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Q'orianka Kilcher, Colin Farrell

New Line / Courtesy Everett Collection

does Smith leave? The reasons are not entirely clear in the 135-minute version now showing in theaters, but it seems he has difficulty sustaining the proper romantic mood through a winter of starvation, relieved only by the generosity of the Indians and a summer of warfare, ignited when Powhatan (August Schellenberg) and his brother Opechancanough (Wes Studi) realize that the English are planting corn and planning to expand their holdings.

Believing Smith dead, held captive by the English, Pocahontas loses her spark until the sweet-faced Rolfe (Christian Bale) delicately rekindles it. Interestingly, he does so without ceasing to be thoroughly, and unapologetically, English. This is not *Dances With Wolves*; not all the virtue is on the Indian side. For example, the female of the English species arrives in Jamestown looking cold and pasty, quite the unappealing dish compared with our heroine. But surprise, surprise—the English matron put in charge of "civilizing" Pocahontas turns out to be a wise and kindly soul whose lessons are eagerly absorbed by her pupil.

At this point, the film takes a turn for the better, not because it favors the English way of life over the Powhatan, but because it does not, for the sake of political correctness, grossly distort the choice that Pocahontas did, in fact, make.

Things stay on the right track until the dramatic peak of the story, which is the return of Captain Smith. In a marvelously depicted voyage to England, Pocahontas (baptized Rebecca) lends her charm to what is essentially a PR campaign on the part of the floundering Virginia Company of London. These scenes are magical in their ability to evoke a sense of astonishment similar to that found in the abovementioned scene of ships on the James River. For a fleeting moment, my eyes felt as though they were gazing not at another movie set version of Merrie Olde England but at the amazing apparition London must have been to Pocahontas.

But Pocahontas is troubled. Having learned that her first love is still alive, she grows cool toward Rolfe, prompting him to risk everything on an arranged meeting between her and Smith. The encounter, which takes place in a formal garden, is both subtle and powerful. Smith is much the same, but through some alchemy of voice and expression, Farrell makes this man who was wild and romantic amid the tall grass of Virginia seem shrunken and coarse amid the London topiary. Pocahontas, by contrast, has grown in stature. Elegant and restrained, she takes Smith's measure and, almost before she realizes it, she has decided to stay with Rolfe.

"Did you find your Indies?" she asks Smith before they part. He gives her a long look, then says, "I may have sailed right past them."

Cut, that's a wrap. No need for Smith's next line: "I thought it was a dream, what we knew in the forest. But it was the truth, the only truth."

Romance isn't the only truth here; that's the whole point. When Malick re-edits this film for DVD, the word is that he plans to make it longer. Great, if this means further development of the clash between the English and the Powhatan, and more lingering visions of strange worlds. But please, cut the New Age mush. It's important when you have a great story not to sail right past it. ♦

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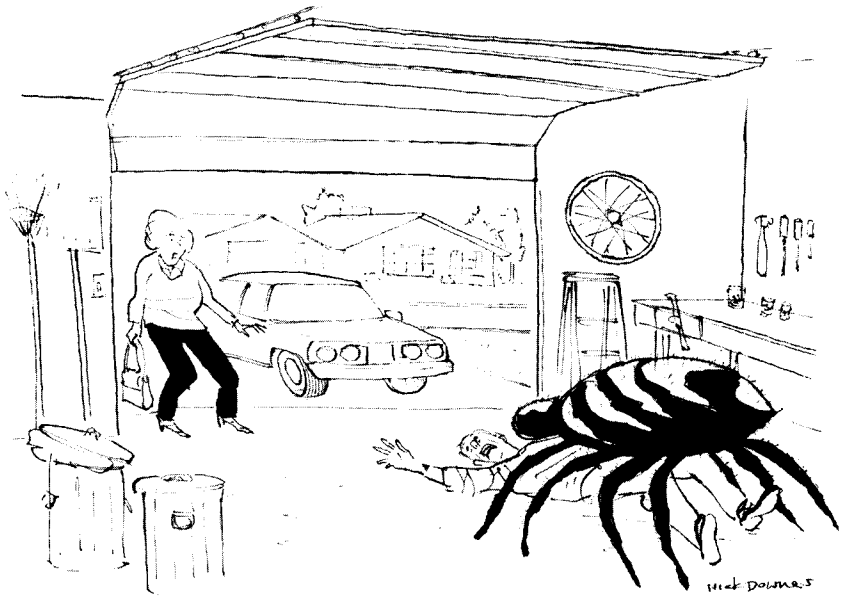

"Don't just stand there—find some curds and whey!"

Books in Brief

***Company* by Max Barry (Doubleday, 352 pp., $22.95).** Poking fun at corporate culture has reached a fever pitch in the past few years: From *Dilbert* to *Office Space* to the sitcom *The Office* (both the British and American versions), entertainers can't seem to get enough of mocking where we work.

Add to this horde Max Barry's new novel *Company*. Fiefdoms are divided among cubicles, sales staff wreak vengeance upon coworkers for taking extra donuts, a new employee's hiring is hidden in the office supply budget. In other words, it's only slightly more ridiculous than any office you've ever worked in.

The company in *Company*, Zephyr Holdings has no customers. Its mission statement contains mysterious phrases emphasizing its desire to forge "profitable growth opportunities" and coordinate "a strategic consolidated approach to achieve maximum returns for its stakeholders." Needless to say, no one at Zephyr is quite clear what its purpose is. In his third month at the company, Stephen Jones finally figures out exactly what Zephyr is up to. And here I reach a quandary: I don't want to spoil the surprises that come after page 100. But I can't discuss the novel's major problem without continuing. So here's the choice: The spoiler-free review ends here by my telling you that *Company* is a good, quick read with some interesting insights into corporate culture that has one glaring flaw.

And to say that the book has a "glaring flaw" is probably an exaggeration; after all, novels are allowed to make arguments. But Barry's insistence that capitalism is morally bankrupt is incredibly distracting.

Jones discovers that Zephyr isn't a real company at all; rather, it's a grand experiment designed to test different management practices in the real world. Those theories are then compiled by Project Alpha (a secret group within the company into which Jones is inducted) into the *Omega Management System*, a series of books designed to turn executives into more effective managers. His world turned upside down, Jones has qualms about what the company is doing. How can they give people meaningless jobs, and then fire them from those meaningless jobs, as part of an experiment? (I should note that he is not worried about *giving* people jobs that don't matter, just taking them away.)

The voice of capitalism is that of the beautiful, but heartless, executive-hiding-as-secretary Eve Jantiss. She is incredibly unsympathetic. When Jones worries about the ethical nature of their work, she tells him that "ethics is bulls—t. It's the spin we put on our lives to justify what we do." How did she get this way? She was raised in a socialist household, she complains to Jones, telling him that her "Mom [forbade] my sisters and I to have individual possessions. Everything was everyone's."

Spurred on by Jones, Zephyr's employees eventually revolt, deposing their overlords in senior management and creating a workers' paradise. But after they take over, the employees spend their time not doing their (meaningless) work. Instead, they play hockey in the office. In his frustration, Jones lets everyone in on the secret of Project Alpha, forcing Jantiss to close Zephyr Holdings for good.

Capitalism is portrayed as evil and socialism as inept. But to paraphrase Churchill, the lesson of *Company* may be that capitalism is the worst economic system, except all the others that have been tried.

—*Sonny Bunch*

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Calls for Calm Amid Cartoon Deaths —CNN.com, February 8

Parody

He is survived by grandson Ji
Morris of Oklahoma; granddau
Julie Walker of Little Rock; ne

Casper
Friendly ghost

SALEM, MA — Cas
Friendly Ghost, who broke ba
ghosts in movies and cartoo
today at an assisted-living fac
here. He was 78.

Casper, whose amiable di

Elmer Fudd
Character actor

WOODLAND HILLS,
Elmer Fudd, who starred i
cartoons from the 1940s t
died at the Motion Picture
a long struggle with Alzh
ease. He was 89.

Mr. Fudd, who was discover
while hunting rabbits in the S
Gabriel Valley early in World War
was famous for his short stature, fl

the weekly
Standard

FEBRUARY 20, 2006

STATEMENT BY FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON ON THE DEATH OF CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST

NYE COUNTY, NEVADA

Hillary and I are devastated by the loss of Casper the Friendly Ghost. Not because his death is a tragedy, for he lived a full and rich life, but because in his very selfless way Casper taught us all the meaning of friendship and genuine courage in the face of prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear. I know that Casper, in particular, would be deeply troubled to know that news of his passing has been the occasion for outbreaks of violence. And I also know this: that he would be the first person to ask his millions of fans around the world to keep cool and honor his memory by grieving peacefully.

We cannot bring Casper back among us, for he is a real ghost now; but we can dedicate ourselves, for the rest of our lives, to do what Casper would have wanted us to do, and to ask ourselves at those key moments along life's journey: "What would Casper the Friendly Ghost have done to make this a better world?"

Bill Clinton

LOONEY TUNES

BUGS BUNNY
500 Termite Terrace,
Hollywood, California

Statement from Mr. Bugs Bunny on the death of Elmer Fudd

I can't believe that my old, and very dear, friend Elmer Fudd is gone. Elmer and I first met at the Looney Tunes/Merrie Melodies studios in the early 1940s, and believe me, the chemistry was instantaneous. It always surprised people to learn that, while Elmer was forever "hunting wabbits" with his shotgun on camera, he and I were best buddies off the set. Elmer's slow, labored diction masked a sharp analytical mind, and his lifelong struggle with speech impediments was an inspiration to me and to his colleagues in the industry. In recent years, as Alzheimer's clouded his memory, Elmer's sense of humor never deserted him, and I know that he would be particularly distressed to learn that news of his death has caused such widespread sorrow and, in some instances, violence among cartoon fans. Mrs. Bunny and I believe that such actions betray the memory of Elmer Fudd, whose friendship we will always treasure.

Bugs

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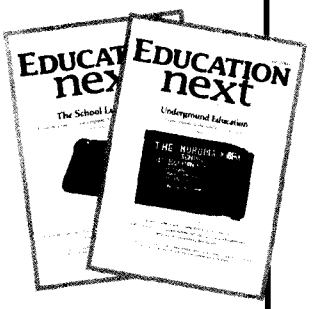

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In the new issue of *Education Next*

Is There a "Qualified Teacher" Shortage?

What factors do affect the market for teachers, anyway?

In the flurry of activity surrounding implementation of No Child Left Behind, the federal requirement to have a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by 2005 seemed an impossible goal. But 2005 has come and gone and the crisis never happened. Why not? The shortest answer is that the dearth of qualified teachers is largely a myth. So is the related notion that raising teachers' pay across the board would bring significantly more qualified numbers to the profession. A more productive line of inquiry explores the possible benefits of replacing our rigid teacher compensation system with a more market-based system.

—Michael Podgursky

How Good at Rating Teachers Are Principals?

The best—and the worst—stand out

Elementary- and secondary-school teachers in the United States traditionally have been compensated according to salary schedules based solely on experience and education. Concerned that this system makes it difficult to retain talented teachers and provides few incentives for them to work to raise student achievement, many policymakers have proposed merit-pay programs. Such programs come with challenges, however. For instance, if students are not tested annually in each subject, how do we determine the merit of a teacher in a year without testing? Can a merit-pay system overcome these obstacles? One option is to turn to principals and ask them to determine the size of pay raises. However, there has been little evidence on the accuracy of their judgments. This article fills that research gap.

—Brian Jacob and Lars Lefgren

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University

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